

# BRENDA'S SUMMER AT ROCKLEY



BY HELEN LEAH REED





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JESSE WILCOX SMITH.



# Brenda's Summer at Rockley

## *A Story for Girls*

BY

HELEN LEAH REED

AUTHOR OF "BRENDA, HER SCHOOL AND HER CLUB"  
"MISS THEODORA," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH

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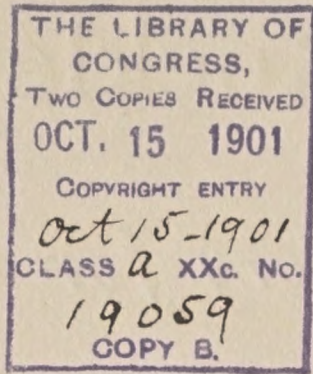
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FROM DRAWINGS BY JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH

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# BRENDA'S SUMMER AT ROCKLEY

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## I

### ON THE SANDS

"BRENDA, Brenda," called a clear voice, "where are you, Brenda?"

"Coming, coming," answered Brenda, from a corner of the piazza. Yet though she had answered cheerfully, she made no effort to rise from her chair. Evidently her book was too absorbing.

"Well, we can't wait for you, you'll have to walk."

"No, no, I'll come," cried Brenda rising, and throwing down her book on the chair from which she had risen. "I'll be down as quick as a wink. My things are upstairs."

Running into the house, Brenda for a moment was lost to sight, but only for a moment. For, quicker than "a wink," she had returned to the piazza, and leaping down the side steps, had joined her cousin Julia waiting a little impatiently at the entrance to the driveway.

"I would just as soon walk," said Brenda. "It is n't very hot, and it's only a little way to the beach."



"I know it; I think myself that it would be rather pleasant to walk. But Aunt Anna wants us to call for her at the village. She went down there after breakfast, and as the horse was harnessed she thought that we might as well drive."

"Oh," said Brenda, "I did not even notice that she had gone out. I have been reading ever since breakfast. Where have you been?"

"I've been pottering around in the garden. I filled the vases for the dining-room, and I've just enjoyed every minute. This seems like summer at last. It's the first really warm day that we've had."

"Well, Julia, you are a funny girl," and Brenda laughed brightly. "Just wait until it is a little warmer, and you won't speak of enjoying a warm day. We can have it warm enough even here by the sea, I can assure you, sometimes."

"Yes, but I don't believe that it can ever be unbearable, so near the sea. Why I have always heard that the North Shore is cool!"

"Oh, perhaps it is compared with some places. I dare say that to-day it is much cooler here than in the city. We'll ask papa when he comes down. At any rate I am glad that it is warm enough now to bathe."

The girls took their places in the carriage, and in a few minutes they reached a group of houses and shops, called by the summer residents "the village," although it had no streets but the main road, no church or public building, and consisted of hardly more than a dozen



houses, — the blacksmith's shop, the post-office in a small grocery shop, and a few dwellings occupied chiefly by people who worked for the summer residents.

Mrs. Barlow came out of one of these houses, looking a little disturbed.

"Good-morning, girls," she said, "I expected you a quarter of an hour ago, although it has n't made much difference — my waiting for you. These laundresses are very trying. Mrs. Slattery is one of the best we have had, but now she thinks that she won't do any more work this summer, because her son is home from Texas on a visit."

"Why, mamma, of course you would n't expect her to work. She'll want to go about on pleasure trips with him; just think how it will be when Agnes comes home, or Caroline. I'm sure that you could n't half attend to them, if you had to do a week's washing at the same time."

Mrs. Barlow and Julia both laughed at Brenda's way of putting things.

"Still it does n't alter the present case," said Mrs. Barlow, "and if Mrs. Slattery is firm in her determination, I shall have to send you girls out into the highways and byways to find a laundress. There are some little cottages up on the back road, and perhaps some one up there might condescend to take in washing."

At this moment a curve in the road brought them in full sight of the beach, which up to this minute had shown itself only occasionally behind houses and trees.

"How beautiful!" cried Julia. "This is a new point



of view to me; how beautiful is the blue of the ocean on a day like this!"

Nor could any one who stood in Julia's place call her over-enthusiastic. The cloudless June sky gave the water the color of the deepest sapphire. Here and there the tip of a billow flashed in the sunlight like the facet of a cut gem. Far at the edge of the horizon two or three small sails sped along as with birds' wings. The light-house in the distance, the little island with the fisherman's hut, the small boats anchored off the point, all combined to make the scene a very beautiful one.

"Let me carry it," cried Brenda, as the driver lifted a camp-chair from the carriage.

"Why, thank you, I suppose that I could let Thomas take it to the bath-house, but it is better for him not to leave the horses. If I had n't worn a long skirt, I'd carry it myself."

"Oh, it's nothing to carry!" replied Brenda, and she trudged along, picking her way through the sand, with the chair under one arm, and a large silk handkerchief containing her bathing suit slung over the other.

"We'll not be the only bathers on the beach," and Julia pointed to a group already floundering in the water.

"Oh, no, but there won't be quarter as many as there will be in a fortnight. It will be a great deal more exciting then."

"Exciting," for the time being, was Brenda's favorite word for describing anything that she considered very amusing, and she used the word on all possible occasions.



"I'll sit here for a little while," said Mrs. Barlow, pointing to the neighborhood of some rocks which cast just enough shadow to make the spot a desirable one for a seat. Here Brenda opened the little folding seat, and then went on with Julia toward the bath-house.

"Have you the key?" asked Julia, as she pulled at the padlock which fastened the door.

"Why, no, I thought that you would bring it."

"How could you? I didn't know where it was. Besides, Aunt Anna said that you would bring it, that she had spoken to you about it after breakfast."

"Then I must have entirely forgotten it; truly I have never once thought of it to-day, until I saw you trying that lock. What shall I do? It will be awfully disappointing not to go in bathing, and we certainly can't dress here on the beach. I wish that we had n't sent Thomas home. I feel ready to cry."

"Oh, don't cry. You are too old for that. Perhaps we could borrow a bath-house from one of those bathers, or —"

"No, I'm afraid that there is n't any chance. Do you know, Julia, I believe that I shall have to give up novel-reading. I was reading when mamma said something to me this morning. I suppose that it must have been something about the key. I said, 'yes,' but really I did not hear a word that she said. I was thinking entirely about the book. It's the most interesting thing I ever read."

"So was the one you read the day before yesterday. At



least you told us so. I have noticed that you have been in a brown study ever since this literary fit seized you. But that won't help us about the key."

"There is mamma waving her sunshade toward us. I suppose she sees what has happened. She always says that I am not to be trusted with keys. I wish you'd go to her, Julia. I hate to have to explain."

Julia ran along the hot strip of sand that lay between her and Mrs. Barlow. In a few minutes she returned holding one hand above her head rather triumphantly.

"There, Brenda, it's all right. Aunt Anna found that she had the duplicate key in her chatelain bag. She called me to see if we needed it. She suspected that something was wrong when she saw us fumbling with the lock."

"Good enough," cried Brenda, "I should have been terribly cross if we had had to turn back without our bath. Keys are a nuisance. Any way there are two separate rooms inside the bath-house, and we can both dress at the same time. I hate those little bath-houses where you have to stand about waiting your turn."

In a short time Julia and Brenda were ready for the plunge. Their dark-blue bathing suits were made alike, high-necked, with long-sleeved blouses, and skirts reaching below the knee, trimmed with rows and rows of fine white braid.

Brenda dashed into the water without a second of hesitation, and almost immediately she began to swim. Julia looked at her in astonishment. She herself had been in the water only two or three times in her life. She not



only had not learned to swim, but she was almost afraid to dip her head.

"Why, you are a perfect fish, Brenda, or a mermaid," she cried, as he cousin swam past her, though considerably farther out at sea. "Aren't you afraid?"

"Of course not." Brenda flung a handful of water at Julia as she waded past. "Just try it yourself, and you'll see how easy it is."

"Oh, I should n't dare to," said Julia.

"Well, you ought to dip your head and shoulders, and come out as far as you can. I can see that you're shivering a little, but you won't after you have once been in all over."

So Julia at last made the plunge, and, dipping head and shoulders, really did feel more comfortable than when she had stood a few minutes before shivering in the sun. But she could not persuade herself to lie flat on her back, letting Brenda support her with one hand held under her chin. She felt a curious faintness when she even thought of doing this, and although Brenda assured her that she would not let her sink, that, even if she should let go, Julia could immediately put her feet to the bottom, the older girl showed a timidity surprising to Brenda, the younger. But they jested, and threw water at one another, until Mrs. Barlow called from the shore, telling them that they had already been in too long. Then Brenda, with a plea for one more swim, splashed about for a few minutes longer, while Julia sat down on the sand to wait for her in the sun.



"Well, Julia," cried Brenda, as they left the bath-house a little later, "I never expected to feel myself as superior to you as I did to-day. Why you really screamed with fright when I threatened you with a ducking!" There was good-humor in Brenda's tone, in spite of her jeering, and Julia understood her.

"Well, I suppose I have never told you of my fear of water. You see I know so little about it. When Aunt Anna told me that she was having a bathing-suit made for me, I felt like asking, 'What for?' I thought then that I should be unlikely to use it. But I decided to-day not to let you know how I felt, but to go in as bravely as possible."

"Yes," replied Brenda, "and in the course of a week or two, you will float and swim, and —"

"Become a duck, just like you. No, I think not," replied Julia. "By the end of the summer I may float, but I am willing to have you know that I am not a bit courageous. Ah! here's Thomas," she added, as a carriage met them in the rather narrow road.

"Well, I'm glad that mamma will not have to wait any longer. Of course we could ride home, too. But I thought it would be a good time to show you this road. There are such quantities of wild flowers."

"Yes," said Julia, "to me it seems very surprising to see so many flowers close to the sea. Just look at those roses," and she pointed to a stone wall, in front of which, and in the marshy field beyond, were quantities of wild roses.



"I remember once learning a poem called 'Wild Roses of Cape Ann,'" said Julia, "and I suppose that we are not so far away from Cape Ann, but that we could apply it here. I think that I can recall a few lines:—

"‘Their paling glories light Cape Ann’s waste shore,  
Bringing the presage of soft-lulling peace  
For summer’s orient days, and brief surcease  
Of wave and granite warring evermore.’"

Then, picking a bunch, she added, —

"‘Rose, thou are the sweetest flower  
That ever drank the amber shower.’"

"Moore, who wrote the last, means any roses," she concluded, "although he had no thought of Cape Ann."

"I never have such fine quotations to fit things," said Brenda; "but I do love these wild roses. By and by, when they are gone, other flowers will come. The butter-and-eggs are beautiful, and there is a field over there that will soon be blue with purple irises, and then, of course, the goldenrod comes in the autumn. I have more love for wild flowers than you would expect in one of my frivolous disposition," and she danced a few steps ahead of Julia.

"There's a better road than this. In fact I don't see why Thomas drove down here. This is too sandy for a carriage or bicycle. After this, we'll go to the beach on our wheels. There — I believe I'll take a ride this afternoon.



"It's a pity that your wheel has n't come down yet, or you could ride with me, Julia," and Brenda rattled on, evidently in the best of humor, as the result of her swim.

"I can't say that I exactly crave a bicycle ride on a day like this," answered Julia.

"Oh, by afternoon it will be cool. There is almost always a breeze, and I shall only go for a short ride about five o'clock. It has n't been a very long walk, has it?"

For they were now at the stone pillars that marked the front entrance to the grounds, and a minute or two later they were seated in wicker chairs fanning themselves, and resting after their exertions. The house was at the top of a hill which, if not really very high, made a rather sharp ascent from the surrounding country.

"It's a lovely view, even though we do have to work a little to get here," said Julia. "If there were nothing but the view, I should be perfectly happy. But from what every one says, I know that I am going to enjoy Rockley immensely."

The accent on the last word sounded a little more like Brenda than Julia, and it was a rather curious fact that the two cousins who in the first six months of their acquaintance had seemed so unlike had begun to modify each other a little. Julia's speech had become slightly more frivolous, and Brenda had acquired what she had previously lacked, a more serious way of looking at things. By serious I do not mean solemn, and perhaps I ought



rather to say she had begun to acquire the ability to look on both sides of a question. It is true that she did not view all matters in this all-round fashion; she often preferred to be a little perverse and contrary. But in her secret heart she was less proud than formerly, both of perverseness and obstinacy.

Brenda was very fond of the sea-shore, where, as long as she could remember, she had been in the habit of spending at least five months of the year. But this was only her second season on the North Shore. Now if I should tell you the exact location of Rockley, you might respond that you know other places just as pretty, — at Beverly, at Manchester, at — but here I might interrupt you to say that just as patriotism obliges us to prefer our own country to every other, so custom leads us to prefer some one place to any other. Some people, to be sure, enjoy rambling from country to country, and others like to have glimpses of various summer resorts; but in the end each one thinks his own country the very best, and in her secret heart every girl believes some one spot — it may be sea-shore, it may be mountains — far lovelier than any other. Brenda, at first, had objected to leaving Cohasset; but one season at Rockley had reconciled her to the change. Now she had gone to the other extreme, in regarding Rockley — as her father's house was called — as the prettiest place on the coast. It is true that she always enjoyed visiting Edith Blair at Manchester, or Frances Pounder at Nahant, or some of her other friends who had homes at Beverly and Pride's Crossing, and the other lovely spots along the



North Shore. She had been interested in what Nora had told her of various mountain resorts, for Nora's parents chose different places from season to season, and usually preferred the mountains to the seashore. But Brenda loved Rockley, for its nearness to the sea, for its sandy beach, for the great cliffs at the end of the beach, for the wild flowers that grew in such profusion along the roads.

She was glad that her cousin had immediately expressed her admiration for Rockley, and already in anticipation she saw before her a very pleasant summer.

"Edith can come up whenever we want her, that is, whenever her mother will let her, and Nora is to spend at least a fortnight with us. Really we shall have great fun. We'd better have her over the Fourth for the races."

"The races?" Julia's expression was one of inquiry.

"Yes, the yacht races. Not very large ones, you know; but Philip's boat will be entered, and sometimes it's awfully close. I just love to see the boats going out of the harbor, and you will, too, I know. We must go over to Marblehead soon. Cousin Edward has a skipper on his boat all the time, and he said that I might go aboard whenever I wanted to."

"But you know," said Julia, with a smile, "that I shan't have time for anything until the end of the month."

"Oh, yes, your old examinations. What a bother it must be, to spend time studying after school is over! That's one thing that would keep me from going to college, if there were no other reason."



"I do begrudge the time a little myself, just now, in this perfect weather. But in hardly more than two weeks it will all be over, and then I shall enjoy my holiday all the better."

"Yes, but next year you will have to go through it all again. No! college would n't do for me," cried Brenda, "I never want to think about a book after the first of June."

"Except a novel or two," interposed Julia, mischievously.

"Oh, well, of course, on hot days when you're resting, you have to read something entertaining, at least I do," and, suiting the acting to the word, Brenda flung herself down in the easy-chair, and, picking up the paper-covered book, resumed her reading.

"Let me know when the luncheon-bell rings, I may not hear it," she called to Julia as the latter passed through the screen door into the house.

But although Julia did call her quarter of an hour later, Mrs. Barlow and she had been at the table for some time before Brenda came, summoned at last by a special message.

"Really, mamma, I forgot. At least I was so interested in my book that I could n't leave it. I had to wait until I came to a stopping-place."

"I'm afraid that I shall have to make a stopping-place for your reading, Brenda, if it is to interfere so with your duties. I must look at your book, and see what makes it so absorbing."



"Oh, mamma, I don't believe that you would care for it."

"I dare say that I should find it a little less absorbing than you do, but still I shall look it over."

"Oh, of course, if you want to," said Brenda, and there was a trace of sulkiness in her tone.



## II

### A MISTAKE

BRENDA had been out on her wheel for nearly an hour. She had had a pleasant ride, first, along the road skirting the ocean, and later, over the main highway. She had now turned into the "back road" so-called, although it was not perfectly clear why the name had been given. It was used more or less by teamsters who wished to avoid the main thoroughfare, along which the electric cars passed. The back road was only a little farther from the beach than the ridge of land on which Mr. Barlow and other summer residents had built their houses.

But the little cottages located here and there along the back road had no view of the water, they had few trees about them, and they were of a rather unattractive style of architecture. Brenda had noticed these little houses the first summer of her stay at Rockley. But she had never been at all curious about the people who lived in them. She knew that a dressmaker whom her mother sometimes employed lived in one of them, and she had heard that a son of Mrs. Blair's gardener — a rather superior machinist — lived in another. He had an important position in a factory that was not so very far away.

Brenda rode slowly along the narrow foot-path at the side of the road. The middle was too sandy for comfort,



but, to her surprise, she found that she was making little progress on the path. In spite of her effort to go rapidly, she found herself proceeding slowly. She felt her tire flattening, she heard the wooden rim rubbing on the ground, — and then she jumped off.

The glance which she gave that treacherous hind wheel was not necessary to assure her that the air had escaped from the valve.

“It’s a new tire; it ought n’t to act this way,” she thought as she bent over it. “Thomas pumped it up for me just before I started.” Then, with a smile, “But I screwed the cap on, and that’s where the trouble is. If I had my pump with me, I could fix it in a minute. Well, it won’t hurt me to walk home,” and she stood the wheel against a fence while she paused to consider the situation. At this moment a girl near her own age crossed from the opposite side, walking from the direction of the village.

“I can get a foot-pump,” she said politely; “we have one in the house, and I see that your tire is flat.”

Now just at this moment Brenda’s eye happened to light on the garden before which she stood, and she saw two or three lines hung with spotlessly clean clothes. Among the garments was a white skirt and waist, and Brenda noticed that they were embroidered, and belonged evidently to some young girl. This reminded her of her mother’s need of a laundress, and immediately, without replying to the suggestion about the bicycle pump, she turned to the young girl.



"Do you know who washed those clothes?" she asked rather abruptly.

"Yes, I do," replied the girl.

"Then I wish you would tell me," continued Brenda, "it would oblige me very much. She must be a good laundress."

The other girl looked intently at Brenda, as if to make out her purpose in asking the question. Then, after a second of hesitation, she answered without any circumlocution: "My mother washed those things. She ought to be a good laundress."

Her tone might have meant either, "Whatever my mother does, she does well," or, "My mother has had so much experience that she can't help being a good laundress."

Brenda interpreted it in the latter way.

"Then I wonder," she said, with some animation, "if she would do some washing for us. You see it is so very hard to get any one who is regular, and my mother has had so much trouble with Mrs. Slattery, and —"

The other girl interrupted her.

"You misunderstood me. My mother is n't a laundress. She just happened to wash those clothes because we are without a girl at present, and we can't find a washwoman, — at least not at reasonable prices," she concluded in an undertone. "They all want to work by the day for the summer people."

"Oh, I'm very sorry," Brenda stood there in considerable confusion, she was often thoughtless, but it seemed to



her that she had been worse than thoughtless in asking so pointed a question of a stranger. She looked a second time at the girl, and decided that, although she wore an inexpensive, and rather dowdy cotton gown, she had an air of unmistakable refinement. Her hair was parted very carefully, and plaited in a long braid that reached nearly to her waist. It was fastened with a pale pink ribbon, as Brenda noticed when she turned to look at her wheel, and the ribbon in color and style matched the ribbon that was tied in a bow beneath her narrow linen collar.

"Why should you be sorry?" asked the girl, in rather a matter-of-fact tone.

"Why, I ought n't to have —"

"Why, there was n't the least harm in your asking the question," she interrupted. "If I could have chosen, perhaps I would rather not have told you who washed the clothes. But of course you can understand that my mother is n't a professional laundress. I was obliged to answer the question that you asked truthfully, and so I think that I ought to prevent your having any further misunderstanding."

"If I had been you," said Brenda, "I don't believe that I would have answered the question."

"Why not?" said the girl.

"It was really no concern of mine. You must think me very rude."

"Oh, no, I am not so foolish. You meant well in asking, or at least you meant no harm."

The young girl spoke in a serious, or almost solemn



fashion. Moreover, there was a little air of patronage in her tone that was novel to Brenda. In spite of the girl's words, Brenda felt that she did consider the question a rudeness, and she found herself in the unusual position of wishing to apologize still further.

"I will get the pump for you," said the other girl, "if you will excuse me for a minute."

Had she been the hostess at a party, her manner could hardly have been more polite and formal. Left alone for a moment, Brenda looked with considerable interest at the house into which the other girl had just gone. It was of the same homely style as several other houses along the road. They had evidently been built at about the same time. They stood with an end to the street, with no bay windows or piazzas to soften their plain outlines. They were all painted a rather dingy brown, and in passing, Brenda had noticed that one or two of them seemed rather the worse for wear, with an outside window-blind missing here and there, or a pane of glass broken, or with a few palings broken from the fence. But the house where the strange girl lived was different from the others in several respects. Although it was of the same dingy brown as the others, the front door had evidently had a recent coat of paint of dark-green. This, with a brass knocker, made it look quite like a city door. The window-blinds, too, had been freshly painted dark-green, and so had the narrow strip of fence running across the front. Moreover, the little bit of lawn about the house was closely cut, and at one side there was a small circular bed, filled



with scarlet geraniums and nasturtiums. There were strips of muslin over the narrow glass windows at each side of the front door, and muslin blinds at the other front windows. Brenda might not herself have been able to give quite so accurate a description of the house as I have given. But she received a very definite impression that the people who lived in it must be rather superior to their neighbors from the fact that they had taken so much trouble to make their dwelling neat and attractive.

"Here is the pump, Miss —" the strange girl had returned.

"Oh, Brenda; every one calls me Brenda."

"Well, my name is Amy," said the other girl; "let me pump that tire for you."

"Oh, thank you," and Brenda held the cap of the valve in her hand, while the other girl stooped over, and attaching the pump, worked it with considerable force.

The operation was not a long one, and the wheel was soon ready for use.

"I hope that we shall meet again," said Brenda politely, before mounting to the saddle.

"Why, yes," said Amy, without much cordiality, "I hope so."

"I live just over there on the hill," continued Brenda, "I should be glad to have you come to see me some time."

"We have nothing to do with the summer residents," said Amy.

Brenda felt snubbed. It was unusual for any one to slight an invitation of hers.



"Well, I'm very much obliged to you for helping me out of my trouble," she added. "It's really pleasanter to ride home than to walk."

"I am sure you were very welcome," said the other girl, then, as Brenda started off, waving her hand in good-bye.

"I'm very sorry," she cried, "that I could n't help you about a laundress."

Was there a shade of mischief in this speech, or did Brenda only imagine it?

At dinner that evening Brenda had a long account to give of her adventure.

"Really," said Mrs. Barlow, "from what you say of this girl, I should think that you could have told at once that she was not the daughter of a laundress. You are altogether too heedless."

"Yes," said Mr. Barlow, "you should look before you leap."

"But I did n't leap, papa, I just slid off my wheel when I found that that old tire had given out."

"It was rather a leap in the dark, I think, when you asked a strange girl of whom you knew nothing if her mother would take in washing."

"Yes, that is so, papa, for if I had looked first at the house, I should have known that the people who lived there were not exactly ordinary people. Really, it was so neat that it looked like — well, no, not like a city house. But it certainly was much better looking than the other houses along the road."



"Well, I only hope that you did n't hurt the young girl's feelings."

"Oh, I hope not, mamma, although she had the most stand-off kind of a manner. I really can't describe it. But then, mamma, you ought not to say anything, for if I had n't been thinking of what you said about looking for a laundress on the back road, I probably would n't have spoken as I did. Just as soon as I saw those clothes, I thought of what you said."

"I must say," replied Mrs. Barlow, "that most of the people who live up in that neighborhood are working people. I hardly see why any one should live there who was not employed by the summer residents. I wonder why the family of your interesting girl should live there. There's no view, and it's not near the water."

"I wonder, too," said Brenda, "and I should like to know when I am likely to see her again."

"According to your own account, she did not seem particularly anxious to renew the acquaintance," remarked Mr. Barlow. Brenda had not spared herself in telling the story.

"Oh, I'll be sure to see her somewhere before the summer is over. If she does n't come my way, I'll look her up, even though it will be somewhat like bearding the lion in his den."

"A case of love at first sight," said Julia.

"Almost, but not exactly. I simply want to know more about her."



"You generally get what you want, Brenda, and we shall expect soon to hear a full account of this — what did you say her name was?"

"Amy, papa."

Nevertheless, more than a week of June days passed before Brenda saw Amy again, and then it was only a passing glimpse, as she rode along the road in front of the house. As she looked, she was quite sure that it was Amy whom she saw tying up a vine in the back yard.

"It would n't have hurt her to come forward to speak to me. I don't suppose a great many persons pass this way," said Brenda under her breath, and she increased her speed, as she turned off into the main road.

But the next week or two brought so many things to Brenda that she had little time to think about the unresponsive Amy. In the first place, there came the seventeenth, and with it a small house-party of older people whom Mr. and Mrs. Barlow had invited. Nobody needs to be reminded that the seventeenth of June is the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill, and although it is only in the neighborhood of Boston that it is celebrated, still it is a holiday that is highly appreciated by people in offices or business, because it affords a day of recreation in the first hot weather. As the small yachts and catboats at Marblehead generally go first into commission on the seventeenth, Mr. Barlow's cousin Edward, who was one of the guests at Rockley, invited not only the older people, but the girls, to take a sail on his yacht.



"It will be great fun, won't it?" cried Brenda, as she and Julia sat in their favorite corner of the piazza.

"Ye-es," said Julia, with some hesitation, "I suppose so."

"Well, I must say that you are not very enthusiastic. It's a perfectly beautiful yacht; it takes two men to run it, besides cousin Edward. Of course it is n't one of the largest. It's meant for racing, but I can tell you that it flies like — like lightning when there's a stiff breeze." (In summer Brenda prided herself on her nautical terms.)

"It's very kind, of course, in cousin Edward to ask me, but I've just been telling him that I think that I won't go."

"Why, Julia, what an idea! Why not?"

"For one thing I should n't be any addition to the party. I'm sure to be sea-sick."

"Oh, it won't be rough, and besides we'll not go out very far."

"That would n't make any difference to me. I should be uncomfortable myself, and probably make the rest of you uncomfortable."

"The sooner you get used to sailing, the better, Julia. We're always going somewhere on a boat."

Julia sighed an audible sigh.

"Besides, I ought to study to-day. In the next ten days I must review all my Cæsar and Virgil, and work out any number of test problems in algebra, and —"

"There, that's what I've always said. It's simply wicked to have any work to do after school is over. It's



bad enough for boys to take college examinations, but girls, — just think how much more fun you could have, Julia, if you had n't made up your mind to go to College."

Julia laughed at Brenda's plaintive expression. "The fun, to-day, begging the pardon of cousin Edward and his guests, is something that I can miss without feeling that I am losing much. I'll work up to it perhaps in the course of the summer. But really I would rather begin with a row-boat on a mill-pond, if we can find one about here."

"You are certainly silly," responded Brenda. "Do come to-day, we may not have the chance soon again. Generally when cousin Edward goes he won't take girls. He prefers men who can look after themselves."

But Julia was firm, and in spite of the urging of her aunt and cousin Edward himself, she saw them set off in the carriages that were to take them all to Marblehead, while she herself turned back contentedly to her work.

In little more than ten days she was to go to Cambridge to take her first examinations for College — the preliminaries — which are held before so many boys and girls as a goal which they must not fail to reach successfully. A year later would come the "finals," and then in the autumn following Julia hoped to register as a student of Radcliffe College. But everything depended on the examinations, and she knew that she must not relax her efforts until the last day. In preparing at a private school she was under certain disadvantages. Some time intervened between the closing of school and the examination, and Julia felt that the daily study by herself



was barely enough to keep the subjects fresh in her mind. Until the end of June she must adhere to regular hours of daily study. After the examination, her real vacation would begin.

Thus Julia sat down very contentedly, re-reading carefully, and as quickly as she could, the story of unhappy Dido, the work that she had accomplished, and her melancholy fate. The two hours passed quickly away, and after she had practised for an hour, she heard with surprise the voices of the returning yachting-party.

"Still at it?" called Brenda, as the carriage drove up. "You must be wonderfully wise."

"Oh, I'm not studying now," responded her cousin. "That was over long ago."

"Well, you would have been perfectly safe if you had gone with us to-day. There was n't a ripple on the water. It was just the kind of mill-pond you would like. Papa and cousin Edward have stayed down there to see if they can whistle up a breeze. But the rest of us thought that we had better come home. I saw Philip at the Club-house, and he said that Edith intended to drive over this afternoon, and I want to see her to talk over some plans."

"I did n't really think that you would return for luncheon, although Aunt Anna said that you might, but I believe that it is ready."

The dining-room was delightfully cool in contrast with the warmer outside piazzas, and as they all sat around the long table, Mrs. Barlow gave a sigh of relief.

"After all, there's no place like home."



“Why, mamma, that sounds as if you had n't a good time to-day.”

“Well, Brenda, I am not as young as you are, and the drive over and the drive back were rather warm. Besides I'm not over-fond of going out in little boats, and climbing up the sides of yachts, are you?” and she turned to one of her guests for an answer.

“On the whole it was very pleasant, Mrs. Barlow.”

“Well, yes, perhaps on the whole. But still —”

“Oh, but, mamma, I always enjoy every minute at Marblehead. We would n't have minded the sun to-day, if only there had been a chance for a sail. I don't see why the breeze died down.”

“Persons addicted to yachting often ask that question,” replied her mother, “and very seldom are they able to answer it.”



### III

#### NEW ACQUAINTANCES

It was a hot, hot day, and Brenda wandered around the house discontentedly.

"I wish that I had gone back to Beverly with Edith yesterday. I'm sure that it must be cooler there. It certainly could not be any hotter. I don't envy Julia in Cambridge, it must be even worse there."

Julia had gone to Cambridge to board for a week. She and Ruth were to have a special tutor for a few days before the examinations. Brenda, without her cousin, felt particularly restless. In the immediate vicinity of Rockley there were few girls of her own age, and she missed the companionship of Julia, even though their tastes and inclinations were not always the same.

"If you had more to do, Brenda," said her mother, "you would be less discontented. I am sorry now that I had not arranged for music lessons for you this summer. Regular practising would keep you from thinking about the heat."

"As if I could sit at the piano on a day like this! How can you suggest such a thing, mamma?"

Brenda did not appear as miserable as her words and tone intimated.



She wore a cool-looking muslin gown, girt at the waist with a blue silk belt. Bands of insertion around the neck made it look particularly cool, and the soft folds in which the skirt hung gave it a very uncrushable and comfortable appearance.

"It's almost 90°," she said, looking at the thermometer. "Oh, dear, if it were not so hot I'd go down to the beach. If I were once there, I'm sure that I should be more comfortable. It would be shady over by the rocks. At any rate, it could n't be as hot as it is here."

"If you really wish to go," said Mrs. Barlow, "Thomas may drive you down. It won't hurt the gray horse to be driven down slowly, and I think myself that you will find it a little more comfortable there."

"Then I'll take a book or two, and stay until dinner-time."

"Yes, and if you do not take a thermometer with you, I believe that you may forget the heat. I think that you have worked yourself up a little to-day watching the mercury."

So Brenda, with an armful of books, drove down to the beach, and placing her camp-chair in a sheltered nook under the shadow of the rocks, began to read. But in a short time she tired of her book. It was the fifth or sixth novel by the same author that she had read since leaving the city. All the others she had pronounced "perfectly splendid," and perhaps if she had read the volume in her hand as the first of the series, it might have pleased her as well. But now it seemed to her like a feeble echo of the



others, and it in some way had not the power to hold her attention. At last she flung it from her with a sigh. "I did not know that 'The Countess' could be so uninteresting. This book is really dull." As she sat there gazing out at sea, she heard the murmur of voices. She realized at once that some one else had come to the rocks to escape the heat. Then as she began to listen more intently she knew that the speakers were not far away. "Why, they must be in the hollow just on the other side of this rock. I wish I had thought of going there myself — but then they must have been there before me. Somebody seems to be reciting something. I wonder who it is; it's a girl, I'm almost sure."

There was something unaccountably familiar in the voice, yet try as she would, Brenda could not decide to whom it belonged. She listened to the words. They were evidently verse. Now Brenda, unfortunately, was not one of those who care for poetry. But in spite of herself she listened. The words were quaint, and hard to understand, but in a minute or two she became interested in the story, which was about a lovely lady who seemed to be wandering in a forest in search of somebody. At length she met a lion, that, "With gaping mouth at her ran greedily." Brenda was now sufficiently interested to wonder if he would kill her. But she had not long to wait, when she heard

"Instead thereof, he kist her wearie feet,  
And lickt her lily hands with fawning tongue,"

and she was relieved at last to hear that



“The lion would not leave her desolate,  
But with her went along as a strong guard  
Of her chast person, and a faithful mate  
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard.”

I do not mean that Brenda could have repeated these lines after once hearing them, but certainly they made more impression on her than poetry did generally. Before the story had come to what the writer of fiction might call a climax, a voice that sounded much younger than that of the reader broke in on the poetry —

“Of course you don't really believe that yourself, honest now. I can tell you that I don't believe a lion ever did like that just because a girl was pretty. Why, he'd be sure to eat her up all the quicker. Don't you think so?”

“No, I can't say that I do.”

“You see, it's like this. If she was real ugly the lion might be afraid of her for fear she'd hurt him. Almost any one would be afraid of an ugly person; but if she looked kind of nice and gentle, why he'd soon eat her, because he'd know that she would taste well.”

“Oh, Fritz, you are so practical. I really thought that you would like this.”

“I do, yes, I do, but I like ‘The Lays’ better. Horatius, now, he was alive, was n't he? and Henry of Navarre. But you must n't look so glum; you can't expect a fellow to like stories about a faery queen as well as he would battles and things like that.”

“Yes, but there are battles in here; why I have to skip



some of them, they are so bloody. If you like, I'll read you some of those cantos."

"Well, I don't know that I care about it to-day," replied the boy. "You see it's pretty hot; not but that I'm very much obliged to you for what you've read; it's so tiresome that I can't use my own eyes. Gracious, what's that?" he asked, as a paper-covered book fell at his feet. Now Brenda — who had been listening with interest to the conversation, because she had recognized in the girl her new acquaintance Amy — Brenda had incautiously held her book over the edge of the rock where she sat, and by a careless movement she had pushed it over the edge.

"Dear me!" she heard Amy say, "a book does n't fall unless it belongs to some one near by. I'd rather not stay here, Fritz, if we are to be interrupted."

"Oh, it's some one up above there," cried Fritz, then, with a boy's impetuosity, —

"Say, you, whoever you are, you'd better come down; we don't like eavesdroppers."

"Hush, Fritz," said Amy; "others have as good a right as we to be here."

Brenda, greatly annoyed at herself for dropping the book, began to descend the rocks to pick it up. She had to go by the path by which she had reached the top, and then by walking around at the base she reached the other side.

Just as she expected, she found the girl who had been reading to be Amy. Her companion was a little taller, and apparently about a year older. He wore a bandage



over one eye, and the unbandaged eye was very red around the lids. Yet in spite of this he looked by no means like an invalid. He had a sturdy frame, his cheeks were full and round, and he had thick, wavy, dark brown hair.

Without a word of special greeting, Amy, who had been turning over the leaves of the book, handed it to Brenda.

"Oh, it's yours!" she exclaimed, with an accent on the last word that seemed to Brenda to indicate more or less surprise.

"What is the name of the book? Who wrote it?" cried the boy, who, like most boys of sixteen, was of a curious disposition.

"The Countess," replied Amy, with an accent of scorn. "It's trash, isn't it?" and she turned to Brenda for confirmation.

"No, I don't think so," replied the latter; "I enjoy all her books. I've read almost all she's written."

"Well, you must be fond of trash!"

"No, I'm not; it doesn't seem to me any more trash than what I heard you reading; that sounded very silly." Brenda would not have admitted now that she had been really interested in the poetry.

"The Faery Queen!" Amy gazed at Brenda in amazement. "Why, it's the finest poetry there is; why I've read about Una and her lion over and over again. Yes, it's the very best poetry, and poetry is always better than novels."



"Oh, come now, Amy, I would n't call it the very best poetry in the world," said Fritz. "There's Macaulay, and some of Longfellow, — the 'Sagas of King Olaf,' — well, there are ever so many things that seem to me to be more amusing; yes, and some things by Saxe, —

"There were three men of Hindostan to learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the elephant, though all of them were blind.'

You see I feel something like those blind men, that's why the poem suits me."

"You're not blind, are you?" asked Brenda, sympathetically. Remembering things that her mother had frequently said about the novels of "The Countess," she was willing for the present to let the talk slip a little farther away from a discussion of the merits of different authors.

"No, I'm not blind, though I might as well be," replied the boy. "I had a beastly cut on the eye by a baseball; it's got to be tied up for ten days longer, — did n't the doctor say ten days, Amy?"

"Yes, he did, but you'll be as well as ever by the Fourth of July; that's one good thing."

"Yes," responded the boy; "but I don't know what I could have done without you, Amy; you've been a regular brick."

"I have n't done any more than I ought to."

"Oh, yes, you have." Then looking up, and realizing that Brenda was decidedly an outsider in this conversation between him and Amy, he turned to her politely. "You



see we have never decided whose fault it was that the ball struck me."

"Well, I should think that it was the fault of the person who threw the ball."

"That's what I say," said Amy; "but Fritz —"

"Nobody can understand about anything without hearing the whole story. Amy was standing on a hill just back of the house, tossing the ball up and down. I called to her to throw it to me, and she did;" then, with a laugh, "of course I didn't mean to have her hit me in the eye. But a girl never can throw a ball straight," and he looked at Amy affectionately.

"Is it a bad cut?" asked Brenda.

"Oh, the doctor had to take several stitches, and that wasn't very pleasant, and it all swelled up so that I haven't been able to use the eye for a month. If it wasn't for Amy I don't know what I'd do. Sometimes I can't see to walk straight. To-day I had to lean on your arm most of the way, didn't I?"

Without waiting for Amy's reply, Brenda broke in, "Why, you didn't walk down here in the heat, did you?"

"Oh, yes, of course; we always do."

"But to-day was so hot."

"Oh, we only walked a little slower. It was hard for you, though, Amy, leading a blind man along; I heard you panting."

Brenda began to reflect that her own lot was not quite so unhappy as it might have been. At least, she would



have considered it pretty hard if she had had to walk to the beach, and Amy lived still farther away.

Brenda had a moment of reflection. Her hour on the rocks had made her very comfortable. She no longer felt hot. The air, of course, had become cooler, a very little cooler, but the sun was still pretty bright.

"It would have killed me to walk down," said Brenda, "and it is n't much cooler now. You must let me drive you home; you will, won't you?" and she looked rather eagerly at Amy. She had already discovered that Amy was a rather positive young person. She felt that if she disapproved of a thing, she would not hesitate to say so.

"We're very much obliged," replied Amy; "but really we would just as soon walk. It is n't so very far."

Fritz was sitting near Amy, and Brenda could see that he gave her arm a little pinch.

"But you might just as well ride," continued Brenda; "there'll be two empty seats in the carriage, and we might have time for a little drive." Amy's face began to show signs of relenting.

"Oh, you might say 'yes,' Amy," cried Fritz.

"Well, if you really would like it. Did you get tired coming down?"

"Of course I did. Didn't you notice how I leaned on you?"

Amy then turned politely to Brenda.

"I would just as soon walk back myself. But I don't like to refuse anything that would make Fritz more comfortable."



If she had been the grandmother of Fritz she could not have spoken in a more parental tone, and yet she was really a year his junior.

Brenda had already decided that Fritz was not the brother of Amy, and she wondered a little why the latter spoke in such a tone of authority regarding him. As if reading her thoughts, Fritz himself began an explanation.

"You see, Amy feels as if she must look after me because I have n't any one else. My uncle is always so wrapped up in his books. Sometimes he really seems to forget all about me. It's not very far from our house to where Amy lives, and she comes over every day — when I can't go to her; and she reads to me, or takes me for a walk, and she's just awfully good."

Amy blushed a little under this commendation.

"Well, it's a great thing for me to have you, Fritz; you're more company than any one I know. Is that your carriage?" and Brenda nodded assent as she saw the old gray horse and Thomas and the carryall turning from the road upon the upper end of the beach.

"Don't forget your book," cried Amy, with what Brenda thought a shade of contempt, as she pointed to the rocks which they had just left. Brenda turned back, and picked up the paper-covered book which a little while before had almost caused a quarrel between her and Amy — that is, if a quarrel could be considered a possible thing between such new acquaintances.

"May I ride in front?" asked Fritz, rather eagerly, as the carriage approached.



"Why, certainly;" and in spite of his bandaged eye, Fritz saw his way clearly enough to jump over the wheel into the carriage.

"Drive along to the Point, Thomas, we have time for that," and Brenda glanced at her little chatelain watch. "We need not be home until half-past six."

"Oh, excuse me," cried Amy; "I have to be home by half-past five; I really ought to be."

"Well, if we were to drive directly there you 'd hardly be there by that time. Couldn't you just take a little drive?"

"I wish that I could," said Amy; "but really I have — have things to do."

"Oh, well, of course if you must go home you must," responded Brenda, and she reluctantly gave Thomas the order to drive up the hill to the back road.

"I could just as well walk home," said Amy, as the carriage turned about; "then you and Fritz could drive."

"Oh, no, indeed," exclaimed Fritz, "I would n't think of driving without you; but it's fine to have this much of a drive, and I'm thankful not to be obliged to walk home. I'm not as fond of exercise in hot weather as Amy is."

At last they drove up in front of the little house which Brenda remembered so well.

"Stop here," she called to Thomas, who apparently thought that Brenda had meant some other house than this as her destination.



"Thank you very much," said Amy, as she jumped out, and then assisted Fritz.

"I 'm going to have tea with Amy," explained the boy. "This has been a jolly drive, even if it was a little short," turning to Brenda, "and I hope that we 'll see you again."

"Yes, indeed," said Amy, holding out her hand in good-bye. Brenda, however, could not help noticing that she did not ask her to call on her.

She felt rather triumphant, therefore, on getting out of the carriage at her own door to find that Amy had left her book.

"There," thought Brenda, "either I must take this to her or she will have to call here and get it. I 'll wait a few days to see which she does."

She looked at the book with considerable interest. It was a school edition of "The Faery Queen," or, as it was labelled on the back "'The Faery Queen,' by Edmund Spenser, Books I. and II."



## IV

### AN ACCIDENT

FOR some days, however, the "Faery Queen" rested undisturbed on the table in Brenda's room, as all at once she found herself plunging into a round of gayety. First of all came an invitation from Edith for a few days at Manchester, and during her stay she was invited to a luncheon party that was decidedly in the order of a grown-up affair, and Edith herself gave a small afternoon tea, and among her guests were some of the older girls who were already out. Then, on her return from Edith's, Brenda found a note from Nora, accepting her invitation to visit, and saying that she would arrive on Thursday afternoon.

As it was Wednesday when the note arrived, this might have seemed very short notice had it not been understood before the girls left town that Nora was to come to Brenda the last week in June. Moreover, on looking at the note, Brenda saw that it was dated two or three days earlier than the postmark, and she judged correctly that some one had been carrying it about carelessly for a day or two. Julia was still in Cambridge when Nora arrived. "Poor thing!" cried Nora, as Brenda ran upstairs with her to show her her room, — "Poor thing! studying and taking



examinations this hot weather. Do you know, I think that that is what prevents my going to College! If I could only get in without examinations, or if they would have them in December instead of June."

"At Christmas time! why, Nora, just think how it would interfere with everything!"

"Well, it would n't interfere with any of your doings, Brenda Barlow, as you are not intending to go to College."

"Ah, you would n't like it yourself, Nora," and thus the girls talked over all the happenings of the past month. For although it was little more than four weeks since they had last seen each other, they both said that it had seemed "a perfect age," and they chattered so fast that it was indeed a wonder that either one of them could understand what was said.

"Still it's only a month, or a little more than a month, since the Shiloh picnic," said Norah, as they sat there talking.

"Well, it seems ever so much longer. I wish that we could have a picnic down here. We must plan lots of things while you stay. There has n't been much going on this month, because people have been later than usual coming down; but by the Fourth every one will be here. Cousin Edward will be sure to take us out on his yacht. I told you about the Seventeenth, did n't I — in my letter?"

"Oh, yes; it must have been great fun."

"Ah, here's a note from Frances!" exclaimed Brenda,



as the two girls passed on into her room. She took up the square, blue envelope with its splashing writing, and turned it over in her hand, after the fashion of girls before opening. "I wonder what she's writing about!"

Then, as she opened and read the note, "There, she wants us to come over to-morrow and spend the day. She says that Edith is coming up from Beverly, and she wrote her that you would be with me. Would you like to go?"

"Why, yes," said Nora; "although I won't pretend that I am crazy to see Frances."

"Belle is staying with her," added Brenda, as she read the note to its close.

"Don't you suppose that that is why she asks you to come now. She knows that Julia is not here, and of course she would rather not ask her."

"I dare say. They certainly are not calculated to get on very well together."

"Oh, Julia could get on with any one, although I don't really suppose that she cares much for Belle. She has always been very careful what she says in speaking about her. I wish that I were as prudent, but I generally speak out before I think."

Now it was really a step forward for Brenda to admit that she would like to resemble any one else, and Nora, observing this change in her, wisely did not call her friend's attention to the fact that she had observed it. She was never quite sure when Brenda's contrary spirit



might break forth, and she felt that she would like the new Brenda to remain as she was for a time.

"You don't object to spending the day with Frances while Belle is there, do you?" continued Brenda.

"Why, of course not. I like Frances and Belle very well at times. I did not really like the way Belle behaved last winter, and I don't believe that I'll ever be as intimate with her again. You see, Julia and Ruth have come to take her place, to a great extent. But I am sure that we can have a very jolly day at Nahant."

Now the real state of things the past winter had been this: Brenda's cousin Julia had come to Boston after the death of her father, to live with Brenda's parents, — her uncle and aunt.

As the two girls were near of an age, Mr. and Mrs. Barlow had expected them to be very congenial; but, to their surprise, Brenda was much less courteous toward her cousin than they had expected her to be. She was unwilling to admit Julia to the charmed circle of "The Four," which was made up of Nora, Edith, Belle, and herself. While she might have been unwilling to admit that she was jealous, she assumed that Julia felt a superiority to her that her year and a half of seniority did not warrant. When she learned that Julia intended to go to College she became ridiculously angry. No girl of her set had ever gone to College, and Brenda, like many other girls of fifteen, objected to having any one in her own family depart from the ordinary routine. Belle, who was inclined to flatter Brenda, had by no means tried to lessen



her jealousy of Julia. In fact, she was willing to pity Brenda and sympathize with her a little, thinking in that way to make herself more important. While there was nothing resembling a quarrel between the girls, the unfriendliness reached its height at the time of a Bazaar, given by "The Four," for the benefit of the Rosas, a family of poor Portuguese in whom the girls had become interested. Although Julia had realized that she was left out when "The Four" were most deeply engaged in making their plans for the Bazaar, she showed no resentment. On the contrary, she did her part in helping when the Bazaar actually came off, and a little later, when Brenda got herself into difficulties, by a very foolish act, she came nobly to the rescue of her cousin. For this Brenda had been duly grateful, and the relation between the two girls was now most cousinly and cordial. Yet in the space of a few months a complete change of disposition is hardly to be looked for in even the best intentioned girl of fifteen. Brenda, therefore, although she now was fond of Julia, for some time was likely to be wilful, headstrong, and more or less selfish.

It was certainly the old Brenda who sat at the table at dinner that evening of Nora's arrival with a frown, — a decided frown on her pretty face.

"I must say that I can't see the least reason why we shouldn't go over to Nahant to-morrow."

"Brenda," responded her mother, "I did not say that you couldn't go, but merely that you couldn't drive over."



"Now that's very different," and Nora's bright voice was a pleasant contrast to Brenda's fretful tone. "There's no reason, is there, Mrs. Barlow, why we should n't go down in the train to Lynn, and meet Edith there?"

"Oh, no; but I should n't care to have you go over in the omnibus to Nahant."

"Oh, but it would be such fun."

"Yes, but I think that a carriage would be better. I could telephone to have one meet you at the station."

"But just suppose Edith expects to go in the omnibus, — could n't we go with her?"

"Well, I will leave it all to Edith. That is, you may do as she does. Possibly Frances has arranged it all with her."

The next morning, accordingly, Brenda and Nora found themselves on the train bound for Lynn. It was a crowded local train, and they had some trouble in getting a seat. But they rather enjoyed the rush and flurry, and the novelty (at least to Brenda) of travelling alone. Nora was more accustomed to journeying by herself, and had even gone once from Boston to Intervale unaccompanied. She was therefore a good traveller, and had her ticket ready for the conductor, and rescued Brenda's from the floor, where the careless girl had dropped it. The two friends laughed and chatted, and were almost sorry that the journey was to be so short, when suddenly the engine gave those two sharp whistles which are always alarming, and many passengers jumped to their feet. Brenda clutched Nora's arm excitedly, for the train seemed to



be slowing up. Nora, whose seat was near the window, looked out and saw a young woman standing at the side of the track, and waving her arms frantically.

The train had drawn up near a little station, and some of the men, as well as the conductor and brakemen, went out to see what the trouble was. In the mean time, the passengers began to speculate as to the trouble, and they all talked freely with one another in rather loud tones. There seemed to be no doubt but that some one had been run over; and when a question was put to the conductor on his return his grave nod confirmed this opinion.

"Oh, dear!" cried Brenda, "do you suppose that they'll bring it in here? I wish that we were n't in the first car."

"No, indeed," replied Nora; "even if the person is killed—he said a girl, did n't he,—well, she would n't be brought in here. You see we're near a station, and, anyway, with so many houses near, they would n't bring the—the person into the car."

Brenda seemed decidedly relieved by this statement.

"You're a great comfort, Nora; you are almost as calm as Julia would be. She never loses her head."

"I hope that the lady who met with the accident has n't lost hers," said Nora, a little frivolously.

"Nora, how can you be so heartless? when I was just complimenting you for being so sensible."

"Well, it may sound more heartless than it is. I asked the brakeman just now if any one had been killed, and he said, 'No!' He explained that it was only a foolish girl



who had tried to run across the track in front of the engine, and had got caught in the cow-catcher or something like that. He said she was more frightened than hurt."

"Then what are we waiting for?"

"Oh, they have to get statements from witnesses, and all that kind of thing. See, they are carrying her into the station."

Brenda, looking over Nora's shoulder, saw four men carrying something into the waiting-room. They caught a glimpse of light skirts, and saw a flower-trimmed hat hanging from the arm of one of the men.

"Just think how dreadful if she had been killed! I do hope that it is n't any worse than the brakeman said."

One of the passengers who had gone to the scene of the accident now came back and reported that the girl was merely bruised and shaken up, and that she would soon come to herself. It was her sister whom Nora had seen standing excitedly beside the track. She had got across safely, and at first glance had feared that the other one was killed.

"Well, I should think that we might start on now," said Brenda, allowing impatience to get the upper hand, now that she was satisfied as to the nature of the accident.

"Just think how cross Edith will be, waiting for us all this time. We ought to have been in Lynn an hour ago." Brenda looked at the watch which she wore on her arm in a bracelet which her cousin Julia had given her the Christmas before.



"Oh, we 're sure to start soon," said Nora, soothingly; and just as she spoke there entered the car a young girl whom the two friends immediately recognized.

"Why, Angelina," they exclaimed, "what in the world are you doing here?" That is, Brenda made the exclamation, and Nora echoed it.

The young Portuguese girl (for it was certainly Manuel's sister) smiled pleasantly at the two girls, but she showed no surprise. It was rather a principle of hers never to seem surprised.

"Such a narrow escape!" she said, plaintively; "why, I 'm trembling now just like a leaf."

The girls looked at her in astonishment. "It was n't you, was it, who had the accident?" asked Nora.

"Not exactly," she replied, "although I feel about the same as if I was. You see, I saw it all."

"Well, the girl is n't killed, is she?"

"No, no, I think not," replied Angelina, slowly. "But dear me, it was terrible. She looked as if she was being drawn right under the engine. I don't see why she was n't cut in ten-inch pieces." And Angelina seemed fairly to gloat over the possibility of the horror.

"Oh, but they say that she was hardly bruised, only shaken up and frightened. I hope that that will be a warning to you, Angelina, not to loiter near the tracks. How do you happen to be here, so far from Shiloh?" Nora spoke as severely as she could, for she really could not understand why Angelina should be so far from home.

"Well, you see, Miss Gostar, it 's very hard for me to



get used to Shiloh. It's so quiet there, so different from the North End."

"But I should think that you could find a great deal to do helping your mother, enough, surely, to keep you busy."

"Yes, 'm; the fact is, I've been almost too busy, so I thought that before the boarders came down where I'm going to work at Mrs. Sholl's, I'd make a visit at a girl's in Lynn. She used to go to my church, and she is coming back to visit me at Shiloh."

"The Rosas are getting up in the world, to have planned for visitors before they are well settled in Shiloh," thought Brenda. Even if Angelina had been able to read her thoughts, her self-complacency might not have been disturbed.

"Are you going back to Lynn on this train?" asked Brenda.

"Well, I hadn't thought of it. I walked down to do an errand for a Mrs. Jims — the lady I'm visiting — it's only a mile or two. When I heard the whistle I thought I'd watch the train come in. I didn't know there was an accident until I got close up. It isn't often I have such luck, — to see a real accident, and meet two friends. It would have been very exciting if that girl had been killed."

Her tone was almost one of regret that the accident hadn't ended in something worse than a mere shaking up of the venturesome girl.

"If you have done your errand, we will invite you to ride back to Lynn with us."



"Oh, thank you," cried Angelina; "I can go as well as not. It is always so much pleasanter to have company."

The conductor and brakeman now reappeared, the passengers took their seats, and in a very short time the train drew away from the little station. It was only three or four minutes before they reached the larger station at Lynn. But as Angelina made good use of the time, they were able to learn that her mother didn't cough as much as when they lived in the city, that the boys thought it great fun to work in the garden, that Manuel had had his hair cut very short, and that they had broken only two cups and one plate of the new dishes. Angelina, herself, according to her own report, was the only one of the family at all discontented with Shiloh, and she condescended to say that she thought she would like it better after the summer boarders arrived. She also promised to go back to her mother the very next day, as both Brenda and Nora said that they were sure that she was needed at home. Angelina probably realized that it was very necessary for her and for the family to have the good will of "the young ladies," as they called "The Four," and the other Bazaar helpers, and she felt flattered that they considered her presence so necessary to her mother's comfort at home. She had a fairly well-developed bump of self-esteem.



## V

### AT NAHANT

ANGELINA waved her hand cheerfully to Brenda and Nora, as she skipped away from the station, and the two friends began to look about for Edith. It was not strange, perhaps, that they did not see her, for when they glanced at their watches, they found that they were more than half an hour late. No one, not even the conscientious Edith, could be expected to wait in the neighborhood of a station so long after the appointed time.

"What do you think we ought to do?" asked Nora, a little anxiously.

"Why, ride in the omnibus, of course," responded Brenda.

"But I thought your mother did n't wish you to."

"Oh, well, she might prefer something else, but it would be very silly indeed to wait for Frances or Edith, when here is this omnibus ready for us. See, it says 'Nahant Beach,' and there are only two or three people in it, so that we 'll have plenty of room."

"Well, I'm not sure," said Nora. "Do you suppose that this will take us to the house?"

"Why, of course; I'm sure that it must. Nahant is a small place, anyway."



The two friends took their seat in the omnibus opposite a fat old lady with a large basket, and a thin man with glasses, who looked rather nervous. Before they turned toward the beach a mother with two little children got in. The children were inclined to be fretful, and they climbed about from one seat to another, sometimes resting their muddy feet against the fresh, crisp skirts of the young girls, sometimes sitting so close to the nervous man as to interfere with his newspaper reading. Once they stepped on his toes, and drew from him a sharp cry of annoyance.

Their mother paid little attention to them; evidently they were accustomed to having their own way.

"Ah, it's something ye want to interest ye," said the stout woman.

"I'm sure that she's somebody's cook," whispered Nora to Brenda; and their suspicion — in their own minds — was confirmed, when out of her basket she drew a bunch of grapes, which she divided between the two restless little creatures. The children, without deigning to thank the giver for the grapes, began to eat them in a very haphazard fashion.

"Be careful," said Brenda; for the children had begun to snap the grapes at one another. "Don't let them come too near." But even as she spoke a well-directed shot landed a grape — and it was a grape without its skin — full in the middle of Nora's skirt. As she tried to brush it off she only made matters worse. For the soft pulp left a decidedly ugly mark on her dark blue foulard.



"There, you naughty children, see what you've done to the lady's dress," cried the mother. She gave each of the children a cuff on the ear, which, however, neither drew a cry nor stopped their activity.

Nora tried to make light of the injury to her foulard, although such an accident was of more consequence to her than it would have been to Brenda. But she was n't sorry when about half way across the narrow strip of land connecting Nahant with the mainland the active mother and the children signalled the driver to let them off.

As the children lurched about in their efforts to move as fast as their mother, they clutched first at one thing, then at another, on their way to the door. The fat old lady did not escape them, and suddenly there was the clicking sound of coin, as, one after another, a stream of pennies and nickels rolled to the floor of the omnibus. The children had only time to gape at the mischief they had done, but Nora and Brenda bent down to help the old woman collect her scattered wealth. For a minute the stream seemed unending. The two girls, indeed, had to do all the picking up of the coin, for the old woman was altogether too stout to stoop. As Nora and Brenda laid one coin after another in her lap; she took each one up deliberately, and proceeded with a sum in addition after this fashion: "A nickel—thank you, Miss; five and seventeen is twenty-two, and this penny,—I'm very much obliged; that's twenty-three, and two pennies,—thank ye most kindly; that's a quarter." Thus she proceeded until the whole amount was gathered up to her



satisfaction. Fortunately there were no other passengers in the omnibus, so that there was no one present to criticise the sight of two well-dressed young girls kneeling on the floor of an omnibus to pick up a purseful of pennies for a stout working-woman. Just as they had finished their self-imposed task, two or three other passengers came into the omnibus, but the girls paid little attention to them. They were looking out of the window. It was low tide, and horses and carriages were driving on the hard sands of the broad and beautiful beach. There were only a few bathers in the surf, and not many persons to be seen around the flimsily built hotel and restaurants. When they reached the peninsula of Little Nahant, there was less of interest to see, and the two friends began to talk (or perhaps chatter would be the truer word) after the fashion of girls. At last they were startled by the driver's inquiry.

"Was you going over to the beach?"

"Why, no," replied Brenda; "we're going to Mr. Pounder's cottage, Green Gables; don't you pass it?"

"Not by a mile or so," replied the driver, with the independence of the true-born Yankee. "'Tain't on our rout."

"But can't you take us there?"

"No, indeed, miss, not now. We run on schedule time, and it would n't do for me to make no changes. You see it is n't my team," he added, noticing the look of disappointment on the faces of the two girls.

"What shall we do?" asked Brenda with some anxiety.



"Well, you might get a carriage up there to the stable on the hill, or you might walk all the way. 'Tain't so dreadfully far. Here's where our road turns off; I suppose I'd better let you off here."

So, greatly to their own surprise, Brenda and Nora now found themselves standing rather helplessly in the middle of the road.

"I don't feel a bit like walking, do you? — and up that great hill, too. Isn't it maddening? They'll be through luncheon by the time we get there."

"I must say," responded Brenda, "that Frances might have sent a carriage to look for us — or something."

Just then they heard some one calling in a rather wheezy voice, "Young ladies, young ladies!" and, turning, they beheld the fat woman of the omnibus waddling toward them.

"Young ladies," she said, as she drew near, "there's a telliphone in me son's shop, and you're very welcome to use it. I'm thinking that Mr. Pounder wouldn't want youse to be walking this hot day."

The girls thanked her cordially for the suggestion, wondering, at the same time, that they hadn't thought of a telephone before they had left Lynn. I am afraid, however, if the truth were told, they were a little too anxious to show their independence and their ability to get on without asking questions. They did not know that the more experienced a traveller is the more likely is he to make all inquiries needed to set him right on his journey.



After telephoning, Brenda learned that Frances had sent to the station in Lynn; but after waiting ten minutes the coachman (seconded by Edith) had decided that the two girls from Rockley had changed their plans. Had they inquired of the station master, they might have learned of the enforced delay.

"But we won't scold them for that," and Nora smiled as she thought of their funny trip in the omnibus.

While they waited in the little shop they found that the old woman, although not a cook, was a laundress, and that she had gone to Lynn that morning to get some fruit for a sick daughter. "I did n't mind when they gave me all that change," she said, "for I had n't any intention of spilling it; but, thanks to you young ladies, I'm no worse off now than I was before."

While they waited for the carriage, Mrs. Moriarty explained, still further, that her son had asked her to turn the five-dollar bill into small change in Lynn, and this accounted for the shower of coin. "He needs an awful sight of small change in the shop," she had explained; "but I never expected to put the likes of you, real ladies, to so much trouble."

"Oh, I'm sure that we were very happy," said Nora; but both she and Brenda gave a sigh of relief as they saw the Pounder's carriage approaching. Frances and Belle were standing at the front entrance to the grounds as they drove up. With their white piqué skirts and becoming shirt waists, with their faces wreathed in smiles, they looked so attractive that it would have been hard for the



casual observers to believe that these two friends were ever anything but perfectly amiable. The wilfulness of young girls, however, and their little faults are, fortunately, seldom more than skin deep; and if the girls themselves would only be willing, sometimes, to see themselves as others see them, many of these faults could be entirely weeded out before striking root.

As Brenda and Nora jumped from the carriage, Edith, in a rather elaborately-made dark muslin gown, came rushing down from the steps. "I hope that you don't think me too mean for not waiting at the station, but, truly, I had no idea that you were coming. I never thought of asking if the train was late. Was it much of an accident?"

"Oh, yes. Was any one hurt?" asked Belle, though her tone was not one of extreme anxiety.

So Nora and Brenda for a few minutes had all they could do to describe, adequately, their sensations, when they heard the ominous whistle, their alarm when they learned that some one had been run over, and their relief when they found that the whole thing had amounted to so much less than they had feared.

"I think that Angelina was rather disappointed that it was no worse," said Nora.

"Angelina!" exclaimed Belle; "what was she doing there?"

"Oh, I forgot that we had n't told you. She was an important part of the affair," and Brenda, with a few lively touches that made the others laugh, described Angelina's appearance on the scene.



"I hope," said Edith, a little anxiously, "that she will go home to her mother to-day. I know that she is needed at home. I can't think why she should be allowed to wander around Lynn."

"Well, we have n't time to talk about Angelina now," said Frances, a trifle impatiently, — she never had been deeply interested in the Rosas. "Luncheon is served, and we must go in now."

"Luncheon," cried Nora, "I was afraid that you wouldn't give us any. I'm half famished. In fact, I thought that I might have to eat up everything in Mrs. Moriarty's shop — or, rather, her son's shop."

"Oh, Nora!" cried Frances, "you were n't in that shop, were you? Why no one buys anything there except the coachmen and gardener and such people. How did you happen to go in?"

"Why we were invited by Mrs. Moriarty herself; how else could we have telephoned? We had n't one in our pockets, Miss Propriety."

Frances had an even smaller sense of humor than had Edith, and Nora and Brenda usually had to temper their remarks to the understanding of the latter. With Frances they were apt to be more impatient. But to-day she was the hostess, as Nora fortunately recalled in time, and during the remainder of the luncheon hour she was careful to follow the lead of Frances and Belle in conversation. Yet at times, when their conversation took a turn that seemed altogether too grown-up and dignified for the occasion, she could not resist exchanging an occasional



glance with Edith, who herself was always natural and girlish.

As Frances' mother was away, she had to do the honors of the house, and certainly, as a hostess, she appeared to advantage. The cool dining-room was a delightful place, with its long, broad windows. One gave a clear view of the ocean and the distant North Shore, and the other opened upon a beautiful old-fashioned garden, with the beds laid in terraces down to the tennis-ground at the foot of the slope.

"Oh, no, I don't play tennis now," said Frances, as they sat on the piazza after dinner. "You know it's almost entirely out of fashion for girls. When the weather is cooler, I'm going to take up golf. But in warm weather I think it's a duty simply to keep cool. Nobody ought to exert herself in the least in hot weather. I don't approve of it."

"Then I'm glad that we didn't try to walk up that hill when we got out of the omnibus," said Nora, mischievously. "Perhaps you wouldn't have been willing to receive us when we arrived at your gates."

"What nonsense!" cried Frances; "but then, really, it's very foolish to walk in summer, it makes one so red and uncomfortable."

"Everybody does n't have horses and carriages at command, as you have, Frances," said Belle, impatiently. She realized that Frances had spoken foolishly. "It's very seldom that my grandmother gives me a chance to drive, and a great many families have no carriage at all."



"Oh, not among people we know," replied Frances.

"Well, there are plenty of horseless people among those I know," said Nora, — "plenty of them; really, Frances, you ought to know more about real life. For my own part, I walk most of the time, in summer as well as in winter."

Frances did not resent the rather sharp tone in which Nora spoke; and as the carriage drove up just at that moment, —

"I suppose," she said, "that you won't object to driving with the rest of us. There is more than an hour before train time. I'm going over to Lynn with you, and we'll have time to drive first around Nahant.

"If Julia were here," she said, as they started out, "I suppose she'd want to see Longfellow's cottage, and Agassiz' house, and all the other historic places, and —"

"But why should n't we be just as interested as Julia? Edith and I have both heard of Longfellow and Agassiz, and all the other famous people who have ever been at Nahant. I only wish that we had time for a sight-seeing expedition."

"Well, we have n't, to-day," responded Frances; "but this is the Ormsby's new house. Is n't it a beauty? And there is the Club; but of course you know that."

"In which direction is Spouting Rock? I've been there," said Brenda.

"Oh, out there," said Frances, pointing seaward. "I have n't been there myself for ages, — not since I was a little bit of a girl."



"Why, Frances Pounder!"

"Well, what is the good. It is so tiresome scrambling about over the rocks. I'd much rather sit on the piazza, or drive. It's our duty to rest in summer."

Nevertheless, in spite of her professed indifference to the best-known spots in Nahant, Frances did point out the unpretentious, home-like cottage where Longfellow had spent so many summers, and several other houses where Story and Curtis and Prescott, the historian, had spent a greater or less time. Yet, although she was more enthusiastic on the subject of the newer houses of her special friends than on the historic houses or the picturesque localities, she made herself very entertaining. Nora consequently came to the conclusion that, after all, there was something to like in Frances; and when she thanked her for a very pleasant day she meant just what she said.



## VI

### JULIA'S RETURN

As the train rolled toward Rockley after their day at Nahant, Nora and Brenda at first were rather quiet. Summer pleasuring is apt to be tiresome; and although they had not exerted themselves physically, their tongues and minds had been pretty active.

"I hope you did n't offend Frances," said Brenda; "she was n't very talkative when we first started to drive."

"I did n't notice it. Why in the world should you think that I offended her?"

"Well, you were just a little sharp when you spoke about driving; and there were one or two other things like that."

"I am sure that you must admit, Brenda, that Frances is rather ridiculous when she talks in that toplofty way. When she holds up her head and talks nonsense, she makes me think of that princess — who was it? — who wondered why the poor people, when they could n't get bread, did n't eat cake instead. We all know that Frances can have a horse for her own use every minute of the day if she wishes it. But many people drive very seldom, and the most of them, I dare say, only know horses by sight."

"Oh, Frances was only thinking of people she knows. Every one in her set drives."



"There, Brenda, that's it. Frances never looks outside of her own set. Tell me honestly, now that you are so much broader-minded than you used to be, if you don't think it's very silly for a girl not to be willing to realize that there are people in the world besides those whom she knows best and considers in society?"

"Why, yes, I do consider it rather foolish." Brenda had felt somewhat complimented by the adjective "broad-minded," which Nora had applied to her. "You know," she continued, "that I don't agree with everything Belle and Frances say. But I think that you are a little hard on them sometimes."

"Frances certainly treated us very hospitably to-day, and it is n't just the thing to criticise her. But, somehow, it tires me to hear her and Belle talking in that languid style, just like grown people, and I'm glad that we are not obliged to follow their example."

When Brenda was dressing for dinner that evening, Nora slipped into her room for a few minutes.

"I always think of this room as one of the cosiest and prettiest I know. These pink roses are so lovely on wall paper, and the china matches it so exactly. Oh, what a delightful easy chair this is!" and Nora flung herself down into the depths of one that held out its arms invitingly.

"I should think that you would feel like keeping it most of the time on that little covered balcony, where you could sit and read and look at the sea, and do nothing else for hours."



"And you were just scolding about laziness a little while ago."

"Oh, well, there are different kinds of laziness. Reading is one kind, that nobody scolds about very much in the summer. What have you been reading?"

"Oh, novels and such things. That's all that I ever do read."

"Why, Brenda Barlow, a novel by 'The Countess!'" cried Nora, taking up some of the books from the little bookcase in the corner; "and here's another, and another, and — why, there are six of them, as true as I live! My mother doesn't let me read 'The Countess;'" and Nora held up the paper-covered book, on the outside of which was the picture of a very pretty woman in a low-necked gown, supposed to be the author.

Brenda blushed a little guiltily. She had never been forbidden to read this fascinating author (at least she considered her "fascinating") because her mother was unacquainted with her fondness for this particular species of literature. Brenda had happened to buy a "Countess" novel at a news-stand, while waiting for a train, another had been sent her by Belle, who had already read it and pronounced it "perfectly fine," and then Brenda, as she had the opportunity, had bought the others. There was no great harm in the books, — or what there was was beyond Brenda's comprehension, — but they were foolishly sentimental, and she had had a distinct consciousness more than once that if her father and mother should discover her reading them they would be far from pleased. At



the same time, she let the books stand on her bookcase, instead of hiding them (as some girls might have hidden them) in her closet. It had never been a family rule that she must ask, before reading new authors, and yet she knew perfectly well that in reading "The Countess" she had not done right. On the other hand, she eased her conscience by saying to herself that she did not hide her books, and that if her mother should happen to examine her bookshelves she would find these novels, and could express herself about them.

"In fact," so her thoughts ran on, "I am not sure that she has not seen them; and as she has n't said anything to me about them, she must think them all right."

But Mrs. Barlow, if she had noticed these books in Brenda's room, had never really examined them. They were as innocent in appearance, when one looked only at their backs, as "Dosia" or "Le Roi de Montagnes," which had a place on the same shelves, and, like the English novels, were bound in paper covers.

Now Nora, perceiving that the subject was not altogether an agreeable one to Brenda, said no more about the tabooed books. But she laid the matter up in her mind, intending, as soon as she could, to make an opportunity to speak about them.

The very next day, fairly early in the afternoon, Julia arrived from Cambridge.

"You really do look pale," cried Nora, after the first greetings had been exchanged. "I am going to join Brenda in pitying you."



"Well, you need n't," responded Julia. "I can assure you that it would be pity wholly thrown away."

"But are n't you tired, and were n't the examinations fearful?"

"Oh, I am a little tired, and the examinations did seem a trifle wearing. But everything seems wearing in hot weather, even pleasure-seeking," and she glanced mischievously at Brenda, recalling one or two hot days when they had vainly tried to amuse themselves.

"Oh, it is positively cruel to make people study and work in June. I would n't do it for anything," and Brenda shook her head very emphatically.

"Well, it's all over now — for this June, at least; and while I won't wholly agree with you about the cruelty of making people study in June, I'll admit that I am very glad to settle down to the business of amusing myself. Have n't you planned something especially in my honor?" and Julia glanced mischievously at Brenda.

"The Fourth of July is the next exciting event," responded her cousin; "but you and Nora must do just as much as you can to make it a great occasion. Without any boys in the family, it is n't the easiest thing in the world to be patriotic."

"What an idea!" exclaimed Nora. "Can't girls be as patriotic as boys?"

"Not in the way of firecrackers, and things like that. It takes boys to make things lively."

"I agree with you there," said Nora, thinking of her own houseful of brothers. "Boys do make a Fourth of



July uncommonly lively. Let me see, I believe that Teddy singed both of his eyebrows last Fourth, and got a spark in his eye that we thought at first might destroy the sight, and Rupert was hit in the head by a rocket, and had to be revived by a pailful of water, and Jim Buller, who was visiting us, broke his arm by falling off the roof of a shed where he had been sitting and waving a flag enthusiastically, and — ”

“Oh, what a chapter of horrors!” cried Julia. “If we should try, I am sure that we could n’t equal it here at Rockley.”

“We ’ll have plenty of fireworks,” said Brenda.

“And if we could borrow a small boy or two,” added Nora.

“There ’s Fritz,” responded Brenda. “But then he might n’t like to be called a small boy.”

“Who ’s Fritz?” asked Julia.

“Well, I don’t know exactly,” answered Brenda; “he ’s some kind of a friend of Amy.”

“Oh, yes,” said Julia.

“Who is Amy?” asked Nora.

“I don’t believe that Brenda knows much more about Amy than she does about Fritz,” said Julia, “unless you ’ve called on her during my absence?” and she looked questioningly at Brenda.

“No, I have n’t,” replied Brenda, a little shortly; “but I ’ve seen her once. I ’ll tell you about it some time. It would bore Nora to hear about a girl she has never seen.”



"Speaking of girls," said Nora, "reminds me of Angelina. We saw her the other day on our way to Nahant."

Thereupon, between them, Nora and Brenda told Julia about their rather singular meeting with Angelina. Julia looked serious when they had finished the story.

"Do you know," she said, "I believe that we shall have more trouble with Angelina than with all the rest of the Rosas. I have a letter here from Miss South; let me read what she says," and she pulled the letter from her pocket.

MY DEAR JULIA, — My grandmother and I are spending a very pleasant month at Milton, and Fidessa scampers about the garden as gayly as if she had never known any other home. I really believe that my grandmother is delighted to be out of the city, although she is slow to admit it. For several years she has been in the habit of remaining in the city all summer. But now that she has a granddaughter to look after her, she is beginning to find out that it is possible to be almost as comfortable in a boarding-house as in her own home. Toward the first of August we are going down to Marblehead. You know I have found a house on a hill overlooking the water, where we shall be the only boarders. That will be the next thing to being in a house of our own.

I must tell you now that the other day we drove over to Shiloh. I spent half an hour with Mrs. Rosa, while my grandmother drove out toward the Lake. Mrs. Rosa is looking much better for the change of air, and the children are as happy as can be. Angelina is the only discontented one. The place is too quiet for her, and she makes her mother miserable by repining for the city. I wish that Mrs. Rosa could be a little sterner with her. She is inclined to let Angelina have her own way. Perhaps when there are more



boarders in town Angelina will feel less lonely. But I am afraid that she will never find Shiloh as gay as Hanover Street. Hoping to see you soon at Marblehead,

Sincerely yours,

LYDIA SOUTH.

MILTON, June 20.

"Well, I declare," said Brenda, when Julia had finished the letter, "how ungrateful Angelina is after all we have done for her. The idea of her wishing to live in that wretched place again — with mice running about, and all kinds of disagreeable things. Ugh!"

Julia laughed at Brenda's disgusted expression.

"I don't suppose that Angelina is exactly longing for the mice; by this time she has probably forgotten them. But you see she has always lived in the city, and she naturally finds the country a trifle dull."

"Dull!" and Brenda gave a sniff of disdain. "I hope that she'll have so much work to do this summer that she won't have time to know whether she's dull or gay."

"Why, Brenda, how you are progressing! To advocate hard work for any one! The next thing you'll be looking for work for yourself."

Brenda took this chaffing in good part. There was never a real sting in anything that Nora said.

"No, indeed," she responded. "It may be a long time before I advocate work for myself. It's one thing to prescribe medicine, and altogether another to take it one's self."

"Oh, well, Angelina is not thirteen yet. We can't



expect much from a girl of that age." Of the three girls, Julia was the most apt to look at a subject from all sides.

"Well, she seems more than that, and I'm sure she is old enough to realize her duty."

"I'm older than she, and I'm afraid that I don't always realize mine."

"The idea, Nora, of comparing yourself with Angelina!"

"I'll admit that we're not exactly twins, but still —"

"Girls, girls," — the three looked up to see Mrs. Barlow standing at their door, — "isn't it pleasanter on the piazza? The moon rises early, and you ought to be there to see it."

"Grand show! Free admittance!" and Nora caught Brenda by the waist to whirl her two or three times around the room.

"Yes, Aunt Anna, we're coming almost immediately; I want to write a note first," concluded Julia, in a lower tone, as the other two started to go downstairs.

The windows of Julia's room looked out toward the sea, and now, as she gazed out, an involuntary exclamation of delight broke from her. The moon, seeming to rest on the edge of the waters, was of a deep orange, or rather of a color that was neither orange nor yellow nor red, but a mingling of all three, and it had a transparency that made it seem almost possible to look through it. Off to the right, the sharp reddish lamp of the lighthouse revolved in its regular course.

Julia counted the regular revolutions, then laughed at herself for doing so. "Creature of habit!" she murmured



reprovingly. "I know perfectly well just how many revolutions there are, and what the interval is between them; but still it fascinates me to count. I half hope that the count will once in a while be different, that I may find the lighthouse in a fault. I wonder what would happen if it should go a little wrong for a night or two. It's more to be depended on than the moon, for sometimes the moon hides behind a cloud. I suppose that that is one reason why we are so fond of the moon. If she were as absolutely unchanging as a lighthouse, we might consider her rather tiresome. I believe I can understand why Brenda is so annoyed with people who claim to be perfect. Angelina seems to be her one exception. Well, the sooner I write that note to Miss South the better!"

Although the light was really too dim for writing, Julia pushed a little table to the window, and soon had the note finished which was to apprise Miss South of Angelina's recent visit to Lynn. She asked her friend to make sure, by sending a messenger to Shiloh, that Angelina had really returned home. She knew that in a general way Miss South needed no suggestion as to what ought to be said to Angelina, and Julia felt sure that she would devise some plan for preventing Angelina's leaving home again.

When the note was finished Julia still sat near the window. It was nearly dark, and the moon, paler in color, had grown to look more metallic. It was high enough to throw a trail of light on the water, and, the better to enjoy the scene, Julia stepped out on the little balcony, upon which her windows opened. She found it, indeed,



pleasanter to stay there than to join the rest of the family on the larger piazza below. Her examinations had really tired her more than she had realized, and she was glad to have this time to herself. Her mind went back over the past year. Could it be only a year since she had sat with her father in that little adobe house in the hills of New Mexico, the place to which they had gone in their last effort to bring back that health which was never again to be his? He had lingered until September; and then the end had come so unexpectedly that Julia had not had time to send for any of her relatives in the East. But she had had Eliza with her, — good, faithful Eliza, who had understood her and sympathized with her, and had come with her on that sad journey across the continent. Her father's will had been very explicit. He had requested that he should be buried in the old cemetery just outside the town where he died. In a letter he directed Julia, as soon as the funeral was over, to go immediately to Chicago. There she was to rest for a few days at the house of an old friend of his, who was also one of the executors of his will, and, as soon as possible, still under Eliza's care, she was to go on to Boston to her uncle, Robert Barlow's. Julia had obeyed her father's commands, and had left the placing of the stone over his grave to his friend, Colonel Amsden, then stationed at Fort Marcy. Her stay in Chicago had so brightened her that when she reached Boston she had felt able to take up the work of the school which her cousin Brenda attended. Before she reached Boston, the faithful Eliza had had a letter from a brother



in Maine, urging her to come to him to take care of his motherless children.

"You don't really need me now, Miss Julia," Eliza had said; "but I promise you that if you ever do I will come to you."

So Eliza had gone away a day or two after Julia found herself settled in her uncle's house, and she had taken with her the faithful setter, "Prince," who for several years had been the companion of Julia's wanderings.

"A city house ain't no place for a dog—even if your aunt wanted him, and I kind of understand that she don't. He can roam where he wants to at my brother's farm, and perhaps next summer you can have him with you at the shore."

But in the late spring Prince had died, — "of old age," Eliza had written, and Julia, though she had not said so very much about it, had really felt his death deeply. Perhaps you may think it foolish for a girl who had just taken her preliminary examinations for College to sit in the moonlight on a warm June evening, shedding a tear as she thought of the faithful old dog whom she was never to see again. But Julia felt no shame as she sighed, "Poor Prince," and wiped away the tears.

The murmur of voices came up to her from the piazza below. But she felt no desire to go down.

"Julia, Julia," called Brenda, "we want you."

"Please excuse me," responded Julia; "I really am tired. Let me say good-night from the balcony."

"A perfect Juliet," cried Nora, running out on the path



in front of the house, and gazing up where Juliet stood on the balcony.

"As I see that you merely mean a pun, I will forgive you," cried Julia. "I am too tired to do even the balcony scene. Good-night."

Yet, although she withdrew to her room, Julia was by no means displeased that her cousin, as well as the others, desired her presence. Six months before, Brenda would have been slow to admit that she had any pleasure in Julia's society. She had permitted herself to be the victim of unreasonable prejudice, which it had taken much effort on Julia's part to remove. Or perhaps it might be truer to say that, without making a special effort, Julia, by merely showing what she really was, had conquered the prejudice of her impulsive cousin.



## VII

### THE FOURTH BEGINS

AMY REDMOND looked wistfully from the kitchen window. She leaned on the sill, and gazed farther down the road, in the direction from which came the sound of laughing voices. A moment later a beach wagon rolled past, and she recognized Brenda as one of the merry party.

Amy turned to her work with a sigh. "It seems to me that on holidays I have more to do than on any other day," she said; "housework is so very, very tiresome." Nevertheless, in spite of her repining, she did not neglect her work, and she took up the slender steel knife which for a moment she had laid down, and went on peeling potatoes.

"It's ridiculous," she murmured, a little impatiently, "for any one to think of eating hot food on a day like this; but I suppose that an invalid has to be humored."

"Amy, Amy," called a voice from the garden.

"Yes, 'm," she answered, briskly, going to the door. "You needn't light the stove until eleven. The day is so very hot."

"Yes, 'm, promptly at eleven," said Amy, glancing at the clock. It was now only half-past ten, and she saw



that she had begun her preparations for dinner a little too early.

Just then an impatient rat-a-tat-tat sounded on her ceiling, as if some one was knocking on the floor above with a stick.

Amy rushed out into the little hall, and up the stairs. In the large, rather pleasant front chamber sat an elderly woman in a steamer-chair, with her eyes shaded by a dark-green shade.

"Where is your mother?" she asked fretfully, as Amy entered the room. Amy hesitated a moment.

"She has gone out to sketch," she said at length, with a little sigh.

"There it is," replied the older woman; "always sketching, sketching, as if anything could come from that. Why doesn't she sit down and work at her miniatures. People sometimes make a little money by painting miniatures. But sketches! who ever heard of any one's selling a sketch from nature in these days."

"There's no sense," said Amy, rather crossly, "in painting miniatures that no one will buy. Mother has several ideal heads that she would sell now, if she could, but nobody wants them. She's painted me from life, and Fritz from life, and one of the little Murphy children down the road, but they're all up there in her room. I can't see that there has been any great demand for them. She enjoys sketching from nature, and I'm glad that she has gone up in the woods now — the house is very stuffy."

"Humph!" said the older woman, with a shrug of her



shoulders. "What's good enough for me ought to be good enough for her. I have to stay in the house, even if it is close and hot. I can't go wandering around in the woods, and I don't see why any one with a grown daughter should think that she has the right to waste time that way."

Again Amy gave a sigh. But the sigh was followed by a smile.

"Let me pull down the blinds at this window," she said pleasantly. "The sun is moving around, and if I open the other window you'll have a current of fresh air. That will be a great improvement."

As she spoke, she stepped forward, and shook up the pillows. "I'll run out to the well and get you a glass of water," she added; "and perhaps you'd like a little luncheon—a biscuit and some apple sauce."

"You can bring me the biscuit," said the invalid, "but I don't care for the apple sauce; it's made of dried apples. I'd like some fresh fruit. Strawberries are pretty plenty now."

"There was a man through this back road with some on a cart this morning," said Amy; "but they were so poor that we thought that you wouldn't care for them. Mother thought she might be able to get some better later in the day. But we're going to have fresh peas for dinner," she concluded; "I'm just going to shell them."

"Very well," said the complainer, "you needn't wait here then. I suppose you begrudge the time you spend with me. But it's no matter; I can sit, and sit, and



I needn't expect any one to pay special attention to me."

"Why, I'll come back, cousin Joan, as soon as I can," said Amy, pleasantly; "and first, I'm going to get the water."

In a moment Amy had returned, with the glass on a little brass tray, in the centre of which was a small fringed napkin. A plate with two crisp biscuits, and the glass saucer with the despised apple sauce were also on the tray. She knew her cousin Joan well enough to be sure that in the end she would find the sauce an agreeable addition to her luncheon.

"You'll call me, won't you, if you want anything else," she said, as she left the room. "I'll leave the door open."

"I'm not likely to trouble you," said cousin Joan. "I hardly ever want anything."

Amy, in spite of her desire to be respectful, could not help smiling at this remark of the invalid's, remembering how often, in the course of the day, she was apt to be called to the sick-room.

"Yet, after all," she said, "cousin Joan is not so very sick. It's only her eyes, and I believe that she doesn't suffer particularly from them. I'm sure she has a very good appetite. If she had n't, I should have less to do."

The peas were shelled, the potatoes were in the granite saucepan, and Amy had just lit the wicks in the kerosene stove in the small kitchen, when again she heard her name called.



"Ah! that's Fritz," and she opened the door.

"Good enough, Amy," said the boy; "I was afraid that you might not be home. I wish that you'd come down with me to the shore. I want to celebrate. I've a whole stack of firecrackers; see!" and he held up a pasteboard box so that Amy could see it.

"I have two dollars, too, to spend; but my uncle won't let me send off a thing near any house. But he said I could go down to the beach—so come, Amy."

"Oh, I can't possibly go now, Fritz; you know how much I have to do. There's dinner to get ready, and—"

"Oh, who wants to eat on the Fourth of July? You could get a bite of something, and then come on with me. Your mother won't care. She likes you to have as much fun as you can."

Amy, leaning out of the window, pointed significantly to the window above.

"Oh, I forgot the old lady. But your mother can stay with her."

"I'll tell you what, Fritz," said Amy, after a moment of reflection. "You stay here to lunch. Of course we can't have fireworks around this house any more than around yours. But after dinner I can probably go off somewhere with you, when I've washed the dishes."

"All right," said Fritz; "I can stay as well as not; and say, don't you think it would be fun to go over to Marblehead this afternoon? We could go on the electrics, and I have money to pay for quite a little spree."

"I'll see about it. You sit here on the back steps in



the shade, until I have the table set. The house seems rather hot."

But instead of sitting perfectly still, Fritz, boy-like, wandered around the little garden, with his hands in everything.

"Say, Amy," he called, "these sweet peas need straightening; they are awfully tangled up. I'm going to make some sticks for them to climb on."

"That's right," responded Amy; "go ahead!"

So Fritz, penknife in hand, strolled about, whittling some thin bits of board that he had found into supports for the pea-vines. Or, rather, he connected the little sticks with pieces of twine, thus making a bit of trellis-work for them.

"Isn't there something more I can do?" he called to Amy. "I want something to keep me busy, so that I won't be tempted to fire my torpedoes."

"Oh, dear, you'd better not!" cried Amy.

"Cousin Joan almost had convulsions this morning when she heard the children down the road shouting and amusing themselves."

"She is a kind of an old tyrant, isn't she?" said Fritz, sympathetically.

"She's had a great many trials," responded Amy; "more, really, than I have had myself. Then her eyes are in a pretty serious condition."

"If she were deaf, too," remarked Fritz, "she'd enjoy more, wouldn't she?"

"Oh, well, tin horns and torpedoes, and all those



things are wearing to one's nerves, and people here in this neighborhood seemed to get up at about sunrise. Ah! there's mother," she exclaimed, as she heard the front door open. "Now we'll have dinner."

It was a plain little room, although tastefully furnished, in which Mrs. Redmond and Fritz and Amy sat down to dinner a half hour later. The walls were kalsomined a greenish gray, and two or three good photographs of foreign scenes hung there, with a fine water-color sketch — evidently a bit of New England landscape — over the mantelpiece. In the centre of the table was a low bowl filled with nasturtiums, and the china and glass, though not expensive, were of good quality.

It took Amy some time to arrange the little tray for the invalid upstairs; and when it was ready, with nothing forgotten, — pepper-pot, salt-cellar, butter-balls, and the many other little things besides the main articles of food, — Fritz hastened forward to offer his services.

"Now you really must let me carry it."

"What nonsense! it is n't heavy; besides, cousin Joan does n't like boys."

"Then I'll take it to the head of the stairs. You can carry it into the room."

"You might as well let him," said Mrs. Redmond, with a smile. "I would never discourage a boy from making himself useful in little ways around the house."

So the two young people, with light hearts and willing hands, carried the tray upstairs. Fritz soon returned.

"I did n't go in," he said, with a grimace. "By the



tone of the old lady's voice, I think that Amy will be kept there some time. I heard her say that for some time she had been waiting and waiting for some one to do things for her. She seemed kind of mad."

"Oh, well, Amy will find out what the trouble is; she can smooth out cousin Joan's wrinkles better than I can."

Amy soon came back to the dining-room, and her face had a deeper flush than that which had been caused by her cooking operations on the little stove, and it was a different color from that which a hot day produces. Her mother saw that she had had some little encounter with cousin Joan, but wisely she refrained from questioning her about it.

Fritz, who now sat at Mrs. Redmond's table, was much stronger looking than the boy whom Brenda had met on the rocks a week or ten days before. He no longer had his eye bandaged, and his cheek was not so pale. He was a mischievous, merry-looking boy, a little younger, apparently, than Amy, yet bright and quick enough to be a congenial companion for the thoughtful girl.

"I tell you what!" he exclaimed; "this is a heap better than sitting down with my uncle in that old dreary dining-room, or ten to one I should be sitting there alone, for you know he never comes to the table unless he happens to feel exactly in the humor. Why, you know that I get more than half my meals alone!"

"Poor boy!" said Mrs. Redmond, sympathetically. "Do you eat more or less than you ought, then?"



"Well, that depends. If it's anything I particularly like, I eat more, and if I don't like it, I eat less. But then I'm on pretty good terms with the cook, and, generally, she takes care to have the things that I like. I'm afraid, though, that I should have fared badly to-day, because I sent off a firecracker, almost under the nose of her pet cat, — my! you should have seen him jump, — and I'm of the opinion that I should have had little or nothing to eat to-day had I stayed at home. My! but everything here does taste good."

"Yes, Amy is growing to be a pretty fair cook. She roasted this lamb yesterday so that we might have it cold to-day; and she cooked the vegetables to-day; and this sponge cake is some of her work; and —"

"There, mother, Fritz would have enjoyed his dinner better if he had thought that you were the artist who had prepared it all."

Fritz was placed in an embarrassing position. He did not know exactly what to say, nor how to decide between his two friends. For to say that he preferred things as they were, might seem to make him, in some way, imply that Mrs. Redmond might have done better; or to say that he was perfectly satisfied with things as they were, might sound as if he doubted Mrs. Redmond's power to do better. Very wisely, therefore, he said nothing, — nothing further, at least, on the subject of the dinner.

For so young a girl, however, Amy had a rather unusual knowledge of cooking and housekeeping matters. Ten years earlier her father had been a rising young



lawyer in a neighboring town. Before he had accumulated much money, he had died rather suddenly. The income which he left his wife and daughter was hardly enough to pay house-rent, even in a quiet street of this town. But among his possessions was a little house on the back road. Mrs. Redmond decided that the very best thing that she could do was to occupy this house. In no other way could she live so cheaply; and although the neighborhood was certainly not a desirable one, she intended to have her little girl so closely in her own care that neither of them would be disagreeably affected by their surroundings.

Until the coming of Fritz into the neighborhood, Amy had had a rather lonely time. I do not mean that she repined, or perhaps realized just how lonely she was. With her books and the society of her mother, she was very well satisfied. Her hands were seldom idle, and her mind was always busy. But her mother knew that it would be better for Amy to have more companionship of her own age, and she regretted that she could not give her daughter this companionship. Now the father of Fritz was an explorer, — an explorer who sometimes was away from home for two or three years at a time. In his absence he left his young son in the care of his own elder brother, — a serious man, fond of study, who had little idea of the proper way of bringing up boys. In other words, he was so afraid that some disaster would befall Fritz in his father's absence, that he was inclined to coddle him. In the winter, when they were in the city,



Fritz went regularly to school; but he was not allowed to play foot-ball or base-ball or to skate, or to do any of the other delightful things which count for more with boys — or at least with some boys — than many of their more serious occupations. Fritz, indeed, often looked longingly at his friends, when he saw them starting off, after school, in pairs or in groups, bound, evidently, for the ball field. He did not like to be considered a milk-sop, and he knew that other boys were apt to express themselves pretty strongly about one who did not share their sports. He did not like to complain in letters to his father, because in every way his uncle was so kind to him. Yet he did think that some of the rules made for him, — that he should be in the house always before dark, and that he should avoid the sports that I have named, — he did think that these rules were rather hard for a boy of sixteen to obey. It was not strange, perhaps, since he had had so little to do with boys of his own age that when he came to know Amy he found her so very companionable. Their acquaintance had begun one morning on the beach, and as his uncle, Mr. Tomkins, came early each season to his summer cottage, in the three years of their acquaintance Amy and Fritz had spent much time together. As they were so near the same age, although Amy had read much more than Fritz, they were very congenial. Fritz, indeed, regarded with much admiration the tall girl who in many ways seemed older than he. Her ideas on all subjects were so much more decided, and she was so fearless in expressing herself.



Mr. Tomkins and Mrs. Redmond were both gratified when they observed the intimacy that had grown up between the two young people. Mr. Tomkins felt that there was less danger of broken limbs for Fritz if he spent the most of his spare time with a girl; and Mrs. Redmond, even though she might have preferred for Amy the companionship of some pleasant girl, still knew that a refined boy like Fritz was sure to have good influence over her. His influence in many ways was even better than Mrs. Redmond imagined. For Fritz was fun-loving where Amy was serious, and it was a great advantage for her to have a friend who could make her laugh — sometimes in spite of herself.

Mr. Tomkins, with his sense of responsibility for his nephew, had Fritz study regularly, even on hot summer days. "A boy who is going to College has no time to waste. There's no danger that you will pass your examinations too well." So from the time he left school in May for their summer home, until the late autumn, when they went back to the city, Fritz read his Latin and Greek with his uncle, and waded through pages of ancient history. Mr. Tomkins was not fond of mathematics, and he was too conscientious to undertake to teach a subject which was distasteful to him. Consequently it was only in winter that Fritz turned to his algebra and geometry. And then he had to devote himself to these subjects with all his might and main, for not even the warmest friend of Fritz could very truthfully say that the bright boy was destined to be a mathematician.



Amy, on the other hand, had not had just the same school advantages that Fritz had had. Her mother had been her chief teacher, and had made her lessons at home very interesting. Twice a week in winter she went to the city for French and music, — an extravagance, some people who knew Mrs. Redmond's circumstances might have said. But her mother thought that to give Amy this opportunity was really a duty, and she felt that she was justified in letting her have these lessons, by the fact that she herself gave her her other instruction. Had they lived in the city, she would have sent Amy to the grammar school; but to have her go to school, as things were, would have meant leaving her alone so many hours every day, that neither mother nor daughter could make up their minds to this separation. Yet Mrs. Redmond was a busy woman, giving all the time that she could to her art, and although she directed her daughter's studies very carefully, little more than an hour was spent in recitations, and Amy had much time every day for reading. Books completely filled the shelves around three sides of their sitting-room, and they represented the best in English literature. In the evenings mother and daughter read together; and when Amy could choose the author, it was apt to be a poet, — Tennyson, Longfellow, Spenser. If any one had asked Amy to say which of these great men she preferred, she would have found it hard to answer. She was fond of them all, and she had begun to make Fritz feel a part of her enthusiasm. When Amy was enthusiastic on any subject, she could quickly bring



others to her point of view; and it was no wonder, then, that Fritz, too, had begun to follow her in her admiration for the great poets.

But Amy and Fritz were both fond of fun, and as they sat this day at Mrs. Redmond's little dining-table, they showed that their spirits were running high.

"Now, Mrs. Redmond, if you say that we cannot go over to Marblehead, I shall consider you the hardest-hearted parent that ever was, — I really shall."

"Ah, Fritz," replied Mrs. Redmond, with a smile, "I have n't a word to say about your going to Marblehead. You know what your uncle would approve, and really I can't see much harm in your going. But it's so different for a girl."

"Why, Mrs. Redmond, have n't I heard you say that you believed that a girl ought to be as brave and fearless as a boy? and Amy is always preaching courage to me. Now I'm sure that if there are any dangers to be overcome in Marblehead, Amy ought to have a shy at them, as well as I."

There was a gleam of mischief in the boy's eye, and Mrs. Redmond understood that his speech was not intended to be disrespectful.

"I don't anticipate any great disturbance in Marblehead to-day, and I daresay that toward evening the harbor will look very pretty. Undoubtedly, there will be illuminations on some of the yachts, and —"

"But, mother, dear, it won't do us any good, even



if there are illuminations. Fritz always has to come back early, and you wouldn't let me stay until dark."

For a moment Mrs. Redmond seemed to be thinking deeply. At last she said, with a smile, —

"I will tell you what I will do. You may go to Marblehead this afternoon, and about six o'clock I will meet you. But first, Fritz, I wish that you would get your uncle's permission to stay out for the evening."

Fritz's face clouded over.

"It won't be very easy to get it."

"I will give you a note to take to him immediately after dinner. It will explain what we intend to do. I will tell him that I will hold myself responsible for your safe return — provided that you and Amy will promise to keep out of mischief this afternoon."

"Oh, mother, as if we ever get into mischief!"

"How about that base-ball that landed so unceremoniously over Fritz's eye?"

"But that was an accident."

"Well, there are one or two other things that I might mention, — only I'd rather not spoil your holiday. But to-day I want you to have just as good a time as you can. The wind has changed since the early morning, and we are not likely to find it so very hot this afternoon."

While Amy was clearing the table, Mrs. Redmond wrote the note, and Fritz ran off with it toward his home. The two houses were not very far apart, although Mr. Tomkins' house was much more pleasantly situated on



high land, with trees about it, and a grove that quite hid the back road from sight. When Fritz returned, it was easy to see that he had secured his uncle's approval of Mrs. Redmond's plan, —

"Only he says that he hopes we won't be set on fire, or anything of that kind," cried Fritz, with rather an amused expression; "as if we were babies!"

"Remember that eye of yours," and Mrs. Redmond shook her head significantly.

"Yes, 'm, yes, 'm," rejoined Fritz. "Oh, Amy, uncle gave me another dollar!" he almost shouted, as Amy appeared, looking very happy in her dark serge skirt and light-blue shirt waist. Fritz was still in knickerbockers, to his own great annoyance, as he had really passed the age when boys are supposed to wear those picturesque garments. His uncle had promised to let him give them up in the autumn; and in the mean time he really looked like most of the other lads of his age who spent half the summer on wheels. Fritz, himself, however, had to take what comfort he could out of the clothes, for a bicycle was one of the things that he was not permitted to have — on account of its danger.

"When you and I have bicycles, what fun we'll have spinning over the country," he said to Amy, as they walked the half mile which they had to traverse before they could reach the electric car.

"When *I* have a bicycle!" exclaimed Amy, a little bitterly; "you will probably be in Europe or Hindostan — or somewhere with your father."



"Well, I've written him about letting me have a wheel, and I'm perfectly sure that he will. I should n't be a bit surprised if I should have a letter any day."

"That will be fine," said Amy; but her tone was not particularly cheerful.

"Oh, come now, don't feel glum; you can't tell what may happen. I should n't be at all surprised if you should have one too."

"Well, I should be surprised. You know it's rather funny, I have a bicycle pump. My music teacher spent a week with us in the spring, and she left it behind her. It's a foot-pump, and rather clumsy to carry to town, so she insisted on letting it stay at our house until the autumn. She expects to come again."

"Oh, yes; that was the pump that you lent to that girl who wanted your mother to take in washing. That *was* a joke!" and Fritz laughed as he recalled the description that Amy had given of the incident.

"There, there, Fritz, I'm sure that Miss Barlow has made up for that since. She was really rather kind to us the other day. You know that you thought so then."

"Oh, yes, you were rather funny yourself that day, — rather dignified and stiff; the way you can be when you are not particularly pleased about things. I fancy that you were thinking about the laundress business too."

Amy did not deny this accusation. She knew very well that she had let Brenda's remark rankle longer than she should have; for, in spite of her politeness to Brenda at the time of their first meeting, and her acceptance of the



apology, she had not felt pleased at being taken for a laundress' daughter.

"The fact is, Amy," continued Fritz, "you are kind of down on the summer people. But I don't think that you ought to be so — so —"

"Prejudiced," prompted Amy.

"Well, yes, — prejudiced. I really think that you are not quite as manly sometimes as you are at others."

"Manly" was a term Fritz applied to Amy when he wished to praise her.



## VIII

### A RESCUE

WHEN the beach-wagon with Julia and Brenda and Nora and the rest of the Barlow household passed Amy Redmond's house that Fourth of July morning, Brenda cast a glance toward the front windows, half hoping that she might see Amy herself. She was by no means indifferent to her new acquaintance, although since their chance meeting she had made no effort to see her.

As Amy was busy in the kitchen, Brenda, of course, failed to see her; and when the latter looked from her window at the passing carriage she gave a sigh, as she fancied that Brenda had quite forgotten her, and had not even tried to see her as she passed by. For in spite of her reserved and somewhat indifferent manner toward Brenda, Amy really had felt drawn toward the livelier girl. As for Brenda herself, while she could not explain the attraction, she had a strong desire to know Amy better. The sight of the house brought before her the incident of their first meeting, and she pulled Julia's arm to make her look in the direction of the house, saying, as she did so, "That 's where Amy lives."

"Oh," responded Julia, "it is a neat place, is n't it?"

"Yes — "



"Brenda," said Mrs. Barlow, from the front seat, thus interrupting any question that Julia might have asked, "remind me, when we reach Marblehead, to stop at Crowther's, as I wrote them last night to have a prescription put up for me."

"Yes, 'm," replied Brenda. "I must get some film there, too; I'm thankful that in this part of the country the apothecaries keep photographers' supplies. I have n't a single bit of film left, and it would be an awful waste of opportunity not to get any pictures to-day."

"How many rolls of film have you used up this summer, Brenda; and how many photographs have you to show?" asked Mr. Barlow, with mock seriousness.

"Oh, papa, one never keeps any account of the film she uses. I'll probably use much more when I begin to develop the negatives myself. No; but really I don't lose so very many, and I don't think it's fair to laugh at me."

"Why, no, Brenda; sometimes you do try to be economical. What was it I heard about your trying to use the same roll twice the other day?"

"Oh, papa, who told you that?" and Brenda herself could not help smiling at the remembrance.

"A girl of your age," said her mother, "ought to have more system. I suppose that hardly any one else would keep used and unused rolls of film in the same drawer."

"Well, I'm trying to be more careful now. It was pretty hard, the other day, to find that I had spoiled all



the pictures that I took of the girls at school on the last day, at Miss Crawdon's, by exposing them again down here at Rockley, when I wanted some views around our grounds."

"How did you find it out?" asked Julia. "When did it all happen?"

"Oh, it was while you were away. I sent the film up to town to be developed; and when mamma, to oblige me, called for the negatives, the photographer told her that the roll had been exposed twice, so that there was n't a single decent negative in the whole lot."

"That was really too bad!" Julia's sympathy was evidently sincere.

"Oh, well, accidents will happen. It is n't to be expected that all one's pictures will be perfect," said Brenda, with unusual philosophy.

"Ah, but you ought to neglect no effort to make them perfect," said Mr. Barlow. "Photography can be made a very valuable form of training in habits of accuracy and neatness — if one only puts her mind on it —"

"Or *his* mind, papa," interposed Brenda.

"I was thinking," replied Mr. Barlow, "of girls, chiefly, for the reason that it is a girl's bill for photographic supplies which my pocket-book has to pay for. I would n't begrudge the money, if the result were more satisfactory; but you must admit that you have n't had much to show me thus far, Brenda."

"Just wait; just wait. For one thing, I'm going to take a lot of views to-day, and I can assure you that you



will be astonished and pleased. I'm going to take you in your yachting cap, and cousin Edward in his shirt-sleeves, and — ”

By this time they were driving down one of the hilly streets by which the centre of the old town was approached. They had been for some minutes driving through Marblehead, but had only just reached the more thickly settled portions.

“What queer houses!” exclaimed Julia. “I have never seen anything like them; they look as if they had just tumbled down here.”

“So far as the line of the street is concerned, I imagine that each Marbleheader suits his own taste. You know they are famous for being a rugged and independent set of people.”

“Their women certainly used to be,” said Nora; “at least, if the story of Floyd Ireson is to be believed.”

“There are two sides to that story. But the tarring and feathering part of it is probably true, and the house of Skipper Ireson is still standing.”

“Dear me! How I should love to see it!” cried Julia.

“Some day,” responded Mrs. Barlow, “you can make a pilgrimage over here; a great many houses more than a hundred years old are to be seen. Some of them belonged to rich merchants; but even many of the plainer buildings have some romantic story connected with them. I do not pretend to know half the landmarks myself, because we generally drive through in a hurry. But we must find some one who can walk about with you, and describe



everything. For I know that you have a genuine interest in that kind of thing."

"Miss South will be here next month."

"That is true; and she would be an excellent person to go with you — if she can spare the time from Madame Du Launay. Brenda," — and she touched her daughter lightly on the arm, — "I hope that you are going to cultivate an interest in history. I have spoken about it before, and you are old enough now to have an interest in that kind of thing."

"I should like to have photographs of a lot of these old streets. They are too picturesque for anything," responded Brenda.

"Photography for you may thus become a stepping-stone to higher things. And I won't begrudge the money wasted — I beg your pardon — spent on films," said Mr. Barlow, in the tone which Brenda called "making fun."

From Crowthers', where they stopped to have Mrs. Barlow's prescription put up, and buy Brenda's film, it was not far to Tucker's wharf.

"We are to walk the rest of the way," said Mr. Barlow, as the girls came out of the shop. "It would be hard to get the carriage down to the wharf, and I doubt that we could find a place to turn. At any rate, it is better for us not to make the attempt. Thomas is to put up the horses at a stable, and have the rest of the day to himself."

Except for the popping of firecrackers and torpedoes here and there, the old town seemed rather quiet, and it



lacked altogether the gayety that might have been expected on the Fourth of July.

"The young people who care to celebrate are probably enjoying themselves in Salem and Lynn, and even in Boston," said Mr. Barlow, in answer to a comment of Julia's. "The old men are down on the water-front, or up on the heights of Fort Sewall, where they can look over the harbor. To-night, when the harbor and yacht clubs are illuminated, you will see the townspeople going out in boats — small row-boats — to enjoy the band concert; but the most of them have gone off to the city to spend the day and evening."

"Oh, papa, just wait a minute; I want to catch that little boy!" cried Brenda, and she aimed her camera at a child who was waving, triumphantly, a whole string of bright-red firecrackers. In a minute or two the narrow street in which they were walking broadened slightly, and they had a view of the water.

"That's the wharf!" cried Nora.

"Where?" asked Julia.

"Why, there, where those people are standing," responded Brenda.

"Oh," said her cousin, "I see the people, but that place there is n't exactly my idea of a wharf."

"Nevertheless, it's altogether a famous one," said Mr. Barlow. "Some of the finest yachtsmen in the country have set out from Tucker's landing to go aboard their yachts."

"Oh, papa, just wait another minute, while I get a



picture of that man! Isn't he handsome! He must be an Italian; and his little boy, too."

"A Portuguese, I'm more inclined to think," said her father, eying the man critically. "Come, Julia and Nora. We will wait for you there by the railing. But I feel bound to join the rest of the party."

"Very well," answered Brenda; "I'll be only a minute." Brenda's camera was one of the smaller hand cameras for instantaneous work, and almost before he saw what she was doing, she had taken the good-looking Portuguese with his basket of merchandise, and his little boy leaning on his arm.

As she began to turn the spool to prepare a second plate, she walked away a few steps, wondering whether she would dare ask the man to turn around a little, to let the sun strike him more directly, so that she could be sure of a good picture. While she hesitated, the man himself came forward, and in very good English said, "I should be very happy to let you take another picture."

So Brenda, rather overcome by this unusual willingness, stepped nearer to him, in order to get a larger picture. Still a third time she tried, after asking him to change his position to the better light; and she walked off, feeling that she really had accomplished something. The light was good; she had a new roll of film; and she had had what the scientific photographer would call an interesting subject.

"Come, Brenda, come, Brenda," called her father; "the boat is here."



Brenda hurried to the others; and as she had still a few minutes to spare, she took a shot at a white-bearded old man seated on the steps of a boat-house near the wharf.

"Oh, Julia, I must take you, too; your expression is so comical," and before Julia could remonstrate the click of the camera was heard.

"What do you mean by 'comical'?" asked Julia, just a trifle nettled.

"Why, frightened. You look as if you were afraid to take the plunge down those steps."

"Well, you know I am not so very fond of the water; and I think that I'd almost as soon sit here on the landing as to take the plunge."

"You'll enjoy it when once you are out there," said Nora.

"Here it is! here it is! Why, there's Philip, too!" she exclaimed as a little launch touched the landing, just as the row-boat from the "Crusoe" arrived there. Mr. Barlow and his party had now descended the steps to the float below, and Brenda gave a hearty, "The same to you," in answer to Philip's greeting, "Many happy returns of the day."

"We're pretty sure of a Fourth of July every year," said Julia, laughing, as Philip leaped from the boat, and came nearer, to talk to them.

"It's pleasant to see you, Philip," said Mrs. Barlow, "although we didn't expect to have the pleasure. How could you leave Manchester to-day? I understood



that your mother had a houseful of guests for the day."

"Fortunately, I was able to get off. They are all older people, and Edith has gone to Beverly for a day or two. I had to come over to try the 'Balloon'; you know Tom and I have bought her together: that is, he owns two-thirds, and I the balance."

"The 'Balloon'; but what an absurd name for a boat."

"Well, the boat is n't absurd, I can tell you that; and, to prove it, I am going to take you back with me to visit it."

"But we are expected on cousin Edward's yacht."

"I know that; but I have settled the matter with him. At least, he said that if you would consent, he would give Brenda and Julia and Nora permission to visit the 'Balloon.'"

"But they can't go without me."

"Well, of course you are included, Mrs. Barlow. Now, please don't say 'No.'"

"But our guests —" and she looked at Mr. and Mrs. Anstruthers, who had come with her from Rockley.

"They look like reasonable people," said Philip, in an aside. "Besides, Mr. Elston has other guests on his boat; and with the Anstruthers and Mr. Barlow there will be plenty of people to entertain them."

"Oh, yes, mamma, do say 'Yes,'" pleaded Brenda; and in Julia's eyes there was an expression that decidedly also begged her consent. So it was decided that soon after two o'clock the launch should be sent from the "Balloon"



to the "Crusoe," to convey Mrs. Barlow and the three girls to the smaller boat.

When this was settled, Philip and his skipper steamed away in the launch, and the Barlow party took their places in the long boat, rowed by two men, which Mr. Elston had sent for them. Mr. and Mrs. Barlow and Brenda had so often been taken out to the "Crusoe" that they would have recognized the men at once, even if their white caps had not been encircled with broad blue bands, bearing the name "Crusoe" in gilt letters.

The two men rowed steadily and swiftly, and in a very short time they were near the yacht, which lay at anchor far out toward the mouth of the harbor.

Mr. Elston stood at the bow, ready to welcome them; and although Julia's heart sank a little as she saw that she must climb a little ladder to reach the deck, she screwed up her courage as well as she could, and, following the example of the others, reached the deck without any mishap.

Once safely there, after a cordial welcome from Mr. Elston, she looked around the boat with admiration. How bright and clean the deck! "Too clean for a mortal foot to walk on," said Julia, as she looked at it. "I should think that it would distress your housemaid to know that we are walking about on it."

"Housemaid!" laughed Brenda. "Why, Julia, you *are* a regular land-lubber! All the work on a yacht is done by men—the very men who brought us over. Isn't that so, cousin Edward?"



"Yes, indeed," replied Mr. Elston. "They scrub the paint and polish the brass, and do more than any five women — begging your pardon, ladies — ever could."

"Well, all the same, I wonder what they use to get it so absolutely perfectly clean."

"Elbow-grease, plenty of elbow-grease." And Mr. Elston smiled at the look of amazement on the faces of the girls. "Surely you remember the lines from 'Pinafore': —

" ' When I was a lad, I served a term  
As office-boy in an attorney's firm.  
I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor,  
And I polished up the handle of the big front door,  
I polished up the handle so carefully,  
That now I am the ruler of the Queen's Navee.' "

"You see, the sailors carry this principle into all their work. And all expect, some time, to rise like Sir Joseph Porter, K. C. B."

Now, while the older people talked and laughed at one end of the boat, in the shade of the awning extending from the cabin, Julia, Nora, and Brenda, in the bow, amused themselves by commenting on the various yachts in sight. There were not, to be sure, so very many to be seen, as the greater number of large craft had gone off on cruises extending over the holiday. Those remaining inside were simply those that did not belong to the classes entered for the races, or they were boats whose owners had guests whom they did not care to take sailing until the afternoon.



"It really is a very picturesque old town, isn't it?" said Brenda, as Julia stood enjoying the view of the old wharves, and the houses sloping upward, rising in irregular rows behind one another.

"What is that Point out there? There seems to be an old fort, or something like it," said Julia, without directly answering her cousin's remark.

"Oh, there is a fort, although I've never been there," answered Brenda.

"All the better. Then we can go together. You may grow as fond as I of exploring."

"Perhaps —"

Just then one of the sailors walked the length of the deck, striking a Chinese gong.

"Delightful sound! Come, Julia, that's cousin Edward's way of having us called to luncheon."

"Come, girls; luncheon! luncheon!" cried Mr. Elston. And, following their elders, the girl cousins, a minute later, found themselves below decks, at the cosy dining-table.

"The cabin is just a little warm," said Mr. Elston; "but all our edibles are iced, and I know that you'll excuse me if I do not serve you regular sailors' fare to-day. I was almost sure that you would n't care for hard tack and bacon. Now, show me that I was not wrong."

Thereupon, his guests did show him that they *did* appreciate iced bouillon and salad and sliced tomatoes and boned chicken, and last, but not least, the sherbet in small glass cups.



The promise to Philip had been explained to Mr. Elston, and he had agreed to let Mrs. Barlow and the girls go for a while, although his consent was given with many expressions of reluctance.

"Nevertheless," he said, as they reached the deck, "as I'm to be self-sacrificing, it becomes my painful duty to tell you that Philip, or rather, his launch, is almost here.

"I had begun to hope that you might lose your way," he said, as the little craft appeared.

"Ah! no, indeed, sir; there's no danger of that when I have the chance of entertaining ladies. Are you ready, Mrs. Barlow? I can't very well leave the boat; but if Mr. Elston will help you down —"

Mrs. Barlow hesitated as she looked at the little naphtha launch.

"Will it hold us all?"

"Yes, indeed; why, eight or nine persons could be crowded in, if necessary," he added.

"You're sure you can manage it yourself?" again asked Mrs. Barlow.

"Oh, yes, indeed! Why not? It's the simplest kind of an engine. I'll do my best to get you safely to the 'Balloon.' Why, you're not afraid, are you, Julia?" he continued, as Julia stood there, gazing at the launch. It seemed to him that there was a shade of anxiety on her face.

"Well, I'm not such a mermaid as Brenda; and if anything should happen —"



"Don't be a goose, Julia; nothing ever does happen," said Brenda, a little sharply, as she took Philip's proffered hand, and took her place in the boat beside her mother. Julia was the last to step into the launch, and she stepped very gingerly, much to Philip's amusement, as she prepared to take her place.

"No, it won't explode, and it can't tip over," he explained, as she asked a question or two. "Just trust your skipper, and you'll enjoy your voyage much better."

"We are n't going very fast," said Brenda, after they had been out a few minutes. "I've been noticing that we don't get much nearer to that boat at anchor."

"I hope there is n't anything wrong," added Mrs. Barlow, a little nervously. "Does your engine usually make as much noise?"

"Oh, yes," said Philip; "it is n't a quiet machine. But now it does n't seem exactly right. It's been a little cranky lately; but I thought that it had got through misbehaving. Dear me!" and there was just a little anxiety in his voice. "I wonder what that was?" For the boat, instead of going straight ahead, whirled about in a half circle.

In spite of their slow progress, they had reached a point well out in the harbor, and there were no other boats near them. Mr. Elston's yacht was under sail, going out of the harbor toward the point with the lighthouse. The yachts that were not in the race, large or small, were outside, watching for the return of the racers.

"We're certainly not progressing," said Philip. "I



wish that I had brought an oar. There ought to be a pair in the boat. Then we could row on."

"Probably Tom will see you from the 'Balloon,' and bring the oars," suggested Mrs. Barlow.

"Unluckily, our row-boat is on shore, getting painted. You see, we've been depending on this launch."

"Oh, well," said Brenda, "all we can do is to sit still until some one comes along with a row-boat, or until Tom discovers our predicament. I suppose that he could signal to some one, could n't he, over at the yacht club, or somewhere."

"Oh, yes," said Philip; "of course, it's only a matter of waiting here."

Yet, although he spoke without much impatience, his face showed his annoyance. It really was very provoking to have to admit that he did not understand the engine of the little launch. A Harvard sophomore is supposed to understand everything; and yet, here was a miserable little boat which was acting much after the fashion of a balky horse. In his inward heart, Philip knew that he had undertaken more than he was justified in undertaking. It was Tom, and not he, to whom the mechanism of the little boat had been explained; and although the engine was not really very complicated, Philip had assumed that he could manage the small craft without expert knowledge.

Mrs. Barlow, reading correctly his puzzled expression, asked anxiously, "It won't blow up, will it?"

At this question of her aunt's, Julia betrayed her own



nervousness by an excited, "Oh, is it likely to?" and of the five, Brenda was the only one who seemed not to be afraid of the sputtering, throbbing little engine.

Nevertheless, Brenda herself would have been as glad as Philip to see one of the distant yachts turn about and come to their help. It was n't that there was any danger of their drifting ashore, or striking a rock, or anything of that kind. It was simply that she felt that if Philip did n't understand the engine, and if the miserable little thing kept on spluttering like that, why, all in a moment something terrible might happen.

"There," said Philip, "I know why Tom does n't signal, or send some one. He's gone ashore. One of the men on the 'Sachem' was to take him over to the 'Eastern' to introduce him to a party of ladies whom he wanted him to meet. He expected to be back on the 'Balloon' by the time we got there. But we're really a little ahead of time, and —"

Brenda herself was now really perturbed. "Do you mean to say, Philip Blair, that we've got to sit here just to see what will happen? Really, it seems as if you might have thought to bring your oars with you, or something."

"There's a boat coming this way," said Nora, who sat facing Philip.

"Where?" exclaimed Brenda. "Let's fly signals of distress," and Julia followed her example by shaking out her handkerchief. The row-boat now seemed to move along more quickly, and, as it drew nearer, they saw that



it contained two people, one of whom, a girl, was rowing vigorously.

In a minute or two it was alongside. "Steamboat in distress!" exclaimed Philip; and the boy responded with a hearty "Aye, aye, sir!"

Brenda, in the mean time, was looking intently at the other occupant of the boat.

"Why, it's Amy!" she exclaimed, turning to Julia.

Amy herself, a trifle embarrassed, soon brought her boat alongside the launch. She bowed pleasantly to Brenda. "What can we do for you?" she asked.

For a moment Philip was at a loss what to answer.

"Well, if we had your oars," he said, "if you would lend them to us —"

"But what would *she* do?" exclaimed Julia.

"Oh, I could tie my boat on, and you could tow us."

As Amy spoke, she uncoiled a rope from the end of her boat, and, with Philip's aid, pushed her little craft toward his stern. The row-boat was soon made fast to the launch, and Amy prepared to hand her oars to Philip.

"But you must come in here with us; there's plenty of room for both of you." At first Amy hesitated. But, on second thoughts, she saw that this was the best thing that she could do for herself. With a little crowding, a seat was found for her, and Fritz remained in the boat.

"Let me take one oar," she said, as Philip prepared to ply them both. "With so many passengers, two rowers will be better."

The little launch now sped along rapidly, and although



the engine continued to pound and hammer, no one minded this very much, since the "Balloon" would so soon be reached.

"Oh! but she is a beauty!" exclaimed Fritz, and Amy echoed his words. You, too, would have been enthusiastic, had you seen the up-to-date twenty-five footer, with her long, over-hanging ends, and low cabin-trunk, and her fashionable, cross-cut sails outlined against the sky. From her mast-head floated the Club flag, with its triangular divisions of white, red, and blue, — a solitary blue star showing on the white field. Philip's private signal, a kind of fish-tail flag, was also displayed.

"I thought you said that it ought not to fly when you are off the boat," said Brenda.

"Oh! when I'm off for so short a time, it is n't worth while to haul it down. Besides, I thought that Tom was to remain aboard, and he and I are one — so far as the boat is concerned."

"I should like to go all over her," said Fritz, with a sigh, as if to do this were out of the question.

"Why, of course you must come aboard," responded Philip hospitably. Fritz looked anxiously at Amy. He was very much afraid that she would decline the invitation. But for once she was ready to accept a pleasure when first offered her. Perhaps she felt that she had in this case earned the right to a little fun. Perhaps, too, the fact that she had never before been so near a regular yacht influenced her, and therefore, when she heard Mrs. Barlow second the cordial invitation, she accepted it.



The little engine was still thumping and sputtering, although not as noisily as a few minutes before, but Philip was uneasy. In his heart he repented that with sophomoric audacity he had undertaken to manage something that he did not really understand, and he decided that it would be a long time before he should again undertake to run a naphtha launch, at least without first receiving instruction as to its mechanism.

As soon as they had seen Mrs. Barlow and the girls safely on board the "Balloon," — for it was only a step from the deck of the launch up the side ladder to the deck of the yacht, — Fritz turned to Philip, saying politely, "Can't I help you with that engine? It seems to need something."

"Why, certainly, if you can," responded Philip, looking with some surprise at the younger boy whose appearance did not suggest a familiarity with machinery. Yet after Fritz had spent a few minutes examining the engine, he reported that he had found the exact cause of the difficulty. A certain valve which should have been open, had accidentally closed, and caused the trouble. One or two other little technical matters relating to the management of the engine Fritz was able to explain.

"How do you happen to know so much about this engine? The launch was made in Pennsylvania;" Philip looked with admiration on the younger boy.

"Oh, the principle is the same in all engines," answered Fritz, "and there's a boiler factory on the road to Beverly,



where I drop in sometimes toward noon. I've picked up a lot from the men."

"Well — I'm certainly obliged to you," said Philip. "It wouldn't have been exactly pleasant to have had fragments of iron flying about the heads of our visitors. I'm glad to have the thing fixed before Tom comes back. He hesitated about letting me take the launch, but I was sure that I could manage it."

"Come, Philip," called Mrs. Barlow, from the "Balloon," "we're waiting to have you show us about."



## IX

### THE "BALLOON"

VIEWED close at hand, the "Balloon" was as flawless as when seen from the water's edge.

"I'm in constant fear of scratching the paint," exclaimed Nora, moving about gingerly on the bright deck.

"I never saw anything quite so shiny," she continued, pointing to the polished brass hand-rail.

"There is n't a speck of dust anywhere on the wood-work, and the sails look as if they had just come from a laundry. Your skipper must work hard."

"Oh, the men on a boat like this have so little to do most of the time, that it would be a pity if they could n't at least keep things clean."

"Are n't you coming below?" called Nora from the cabin door.

"Why, yes," replied Brenda. "Come on, Julia."

Descending into the cabin, Brenda, who had been on the "Balloon" before, began to explain its fittings to the others.

"These are transom-seats. You must n't call them 'benches,' or even 'divans,' and they are most surprising."

She lifted one of the green corduroy cushions, and touching a handle, showed that the seats were really great boxes.



"Dear me! did you ever see such a collection of canned things. Green peas, sardines, mushrooms, caviare! How extravagant those boys are! They ought to live on hard tack and corned beef," cried Nora, as she poked among the things stowed away under the transom-seats.

"Not much! corned beef, indeed!" exclaimed Philip. "We 'd have shown you something very different from that at luncheon to-day. But what do you really think of the 'Balloon'?" The question was so evidently addressed to Julia, that she very naturally replied to it.

"It's beautiful. It makes me think of a doll's house, it's so complete." She glanced with approval from the roof, finished in mahogany, to the pale green carpet that harmonized so well with the corduroy coverings of the transom-seats.

Brenda, meanwhile, continued opening various locker doors, and Amy and Nora repeatedly expressed their amazement when they saw how closely things were stowed away. Every bit of space had been cleverly utilized, and all kinds of little conveniences made their appearance in unexpected places.

Back of the transoms were lockers where pillows and bedding were kept, and Philip showed how two good beds could be made up by pulling out the transom, and spreading flat the cushions at the back.

"But you often have a guest, and where in the world do you put him?" asked Nora.

"Oh! we have an air mattress, and we lay it just in the middle of the floor. If our visitor does n't like that, we



let him have one of the transom bunks, and Tom or I takes the floor," answered Philip, with a laugh.

Two brass lamps with white and gold shades swung from the forward bulkhead, and under the lamps on each side of the boat was a chest of drawers.

Brenda, venturing to look into some of the drawers, called Nora's attention to the neat piles of table linen, while Amy and Julia went into ecstasies over the delicate glass tumblers in the rack above the dresser, on which were painted the Club flag, and Philip's signal.

"I must say your library is n't very extensive," said Nora, turning over the books on the shelves above the transoms.

"Oh, if we had many books, we should n't have room for other things," and Philip pointed to the cameras, field-glass, yachting-caps, and other odds and ends that took up the most of the shelf-space. "But come, you must see where we keep our charts."

Philip opened the door of the little lavatory with its set basin and bright faucets, and from one wall removed what looked like a flat board. He explained that this was the dining-table, which when in use had one end placed on a bulkhead at the forward end of the cabin, while the other was supported on a pair of legs.

"But this is what I wanted to show you," he said, and from the wall behind the table he removed a large portfolio, in which were the large charts which he displayed with genuine pride.

"Where do you get your water?" asked Julia, more interested in the boat's appointments than in the chart.



"Oh, there's a tank in the cock-pit that holds thirty or forty gallons. We get the water from a water-boat that comes around to the yachts every day. It's the cheapest thing you ever heard of—something like twenty-five cents for fifty gallons."

"Cheap enough!" said Nora, "but isn't that your mother calling, Brenda? I suppose we ought to go on deck."

"Oh, not until we've seen everything," cried Julia, and then, with Philip leading, she followed the others to the door in the bulkhead, and there Philip opened the dish-lockers on the port side, and evidently enjoyed their admiration of the pretty white and gold china with the Club and private flags painted in colors, just as on the glass tumblers and water pitcher. Beyond, they caught a glimpse of the oil stove on which the cooking was done. All kinds of cooking utensils, from a frying-pan to an agate coffee-pot, hung about on nails.

"Everything has its place, and we can put our hands on anything in the dark. Jansen makes a fearful row if we don't put things back just where we found them."

"The idea!" exclaimed Brenda, "it is n't his boat."

"No, but he's responsible for its appearance. To be perfectly orderly is the only way to get along on a yacht.

"There's our ice-chest on the starboard side," continued Philip, changing the subject, "and that iron frame there is the folding-bed for the men, which is let down only at night. There's really nothing more to see there, except some light sails and extra robes, and lanterns, and other duffle stowed away there in the eyes."



"Duffle!" exclaimed Nora, "what a delicious word! Does it just mean 'things'?"

"Yes," answered Philip, — "it just means 'things.'"

"'Eyes,'" repeated Julia, "I never heard the word used in that sense before."

"I fairly love such words," added Brenda; and laughing and exclaiming over what they had seen, the girls were soon on deck again.

There they found Tom Hearst, who had just stepped from the "Sachem's" boat, making many apologies to Mrs. Barlow for his failure to be on board to welcome them.

"It was something I could n't help, or you may be sure that I should n't have been away," and then he turned to the girls to hear their praises of the boat.

"Here's Jansen returning, too," he exclaimed. "Now we can have a sail."

"There's no reason, is there," added Philip, "why we should n't sail, just a mile or two — more or less?"

Mrs. Barlow, to whom the question seemed to be addressed, hesitated a moment.

"I suppose that you would all think me very cruel if I should refuse."

"Yes, I am afraid that we might — although of course we'd try not to," responded Philip, gallantly.

"Oh, mamma, why should n't we go?" interposed Brenda.

"There are several reasons, my dear. First of all, I mustn't be away too long from cousin Edward and the rest of our guests. Then I am not really very fond of



sailing myself, and Julia, I am sure, is hardly equal to a rough tossing about. Don't you think that it will be rough, Philip?"

"As to the last question, Mrs. Barlow, I'm sure that it won't be rough. The 'Balloon' will glide like a bird, and before you know it, we shall have had a delightful sail. If I didn't feel sure that you and Julia would be perfectly comfortable, I would n't ask you to go."

"But the people on the 'Crusoe,' what will they think of us?"

"Why, they've gone outside themselves! We're more likely to see them by sailing than by lying at anchor."

"Yes, really, Mrs. Barlow, do let us show you what the 'Balloon' can do under sail," and Tom Hearst spoke with great earnestness.

Mrs. Barlow smiled at the eagerness of the two youths. "Your last argument was really the strongest, Philip; I think myself that we might as well keep our eye to the 'Crusoe.' I had forgotten that she had deserted us."

"Never mind," said Philip, "we'll overtake her, and make her ashamed of herself."

Thus with sails almost full, the "Balloon" started out, almost like a living creature, as if she felt the spirit of emulation that possessed the breasts of her young owners.

"It does n't seem possible that it can be hot on shore," said Nora, as they danced along.

"No, indeed," and Julia's voice had a note of pity in it, as she added; "just think of the poor people stifling in narrow streets to-day."



"Thank you just the same," said Brenda, "but I don't care to think of such disagreeable things. Besides the only poor family that I know much about has been moved to a comfortable country place, and as to the rest of them, I mean the poor people in Boston, why I believe that the most of them are out on the Common, or in the Park, amusing themselves."

"You're more than half right, Brenda," said Nora, "the Fourth of July is really the poor people's holiday in town. I've been in town on the Fourth, and they seem to own the whole place."

"Do you suppose that that is the 'Crusoe'?" asked Julia, looking eagerly at a yacht still so far ahead of them as to look but a small boat.

"If it is, she'll soon hear from us," said Philip, "for we're going to overtake her sure."

Now for some reason or other the wind seemed to favor the "Balloon," or perhaps, as the boys modestly suggested, it was because they and their skipper showed superior seamanship. Whatever the cause, after tacking about for some time, to the great edification of Fritz, they met the "Crusoe," just as she began to turn about.

"That was n't bad for a small boat," cried Tom, "now you can have an idea of what we might do, if we really should try to accomplish anything."

Hats and handkerchiefs were waved on both boats, as they passed, not near enough for actual speaking. On the home stretch, however, the "Crusoe" made the better time, and she rounded the Point with the lighthouse some minutes ahead of the "Balloon."



Contrary to her own expectation, Julia had not been uncomfortable on this her first trip on a sail-boat. In the society of her friends, too, she had forgotten half her fears. Nevertheless, had any one asked her to tell the exact truth, she would have confessed that she would just a little rather be on dry land than on water.

How different it was with Amy! With her veil tied tightly over her hair, with a cape that the boys brought up from the cabin thrown over her shoulders, sitting on the floor of the deck with her back braced against the cabin, she enjoyed every minute. This was something that she had never hoped to enjoy, to have a sail in a real yacht — and she might have added “with real people,” so seldom had it been her good fortune to have the society of young persons of her own age.

There was certainly a dreamy look in Amy's eyes as she sat there, and Fritz, noticing it, as he passed her once, leaned over and whispered, —

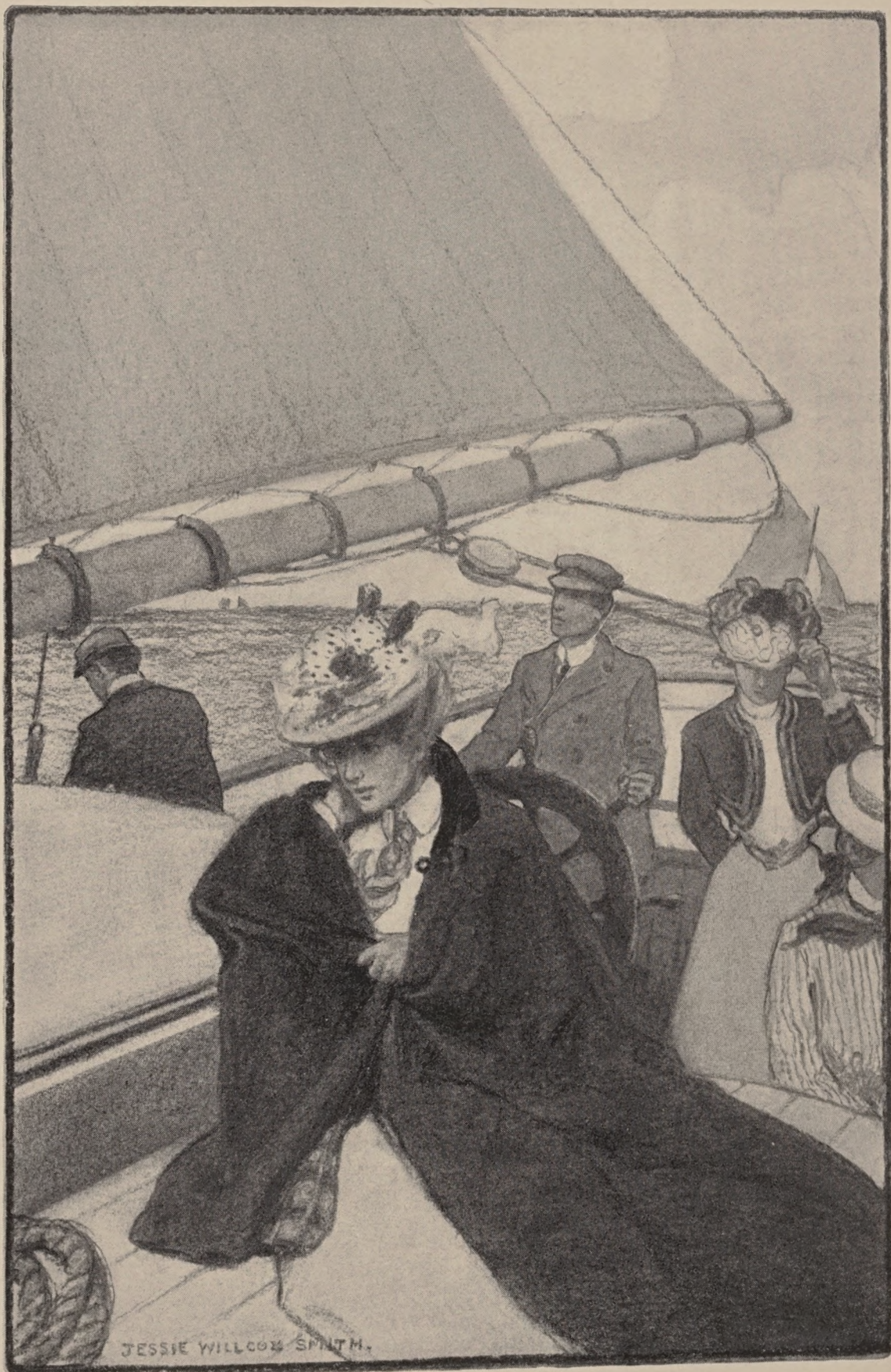
“Writing a poem, Amy?”

At this Amy reddened, for Fritz had come pretty near the truth. If she was not actually composing a poem, she was planning one. She was thinking that there was almost no other object so beautiful as the sea: —

“The sea! the sea! the open sea!  
The blue, the fresh, the ever free!  
Without a mark, without a bound,  
It runneth the earth's wide region round.  
It plays with the clouds, it mocks the skies, —  
Or like a cradled creature lies.”

Fritz sometimes said that Amy had a quotation ready for every occasion, and it was certainly true that she could





JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH.







often find one ready to use, when she had an appreciative audience. This appreciative audience usually consisted only of her mother, although Fritz had begun to acquire what he called a "poetic ear," and, in spite of his occasionally scoffing tone, he really did get great comfort from some of the poems which Amy liked the best. When it came to her original verses, however, she was less confidential with Fritz. He knew that she wrote poetry, because he had more than once come upon her when engaged in this entrancing occupation. Once or twice, too, when he had seemed to be in an appreciative mood, she had read some of her work to him. But she was willing to admit that she was once so annoyed with him for laughing at one of her particularly lofty sentiments, that since that time she had refused to let him near or see any more of her original poems. It was to punish her, then, that Fritz, whenever he saw a certain dreamy expression on her usually wide-awake face, would make some teasing allusion to her own poetic efforts.

While Julia and Amy were rather quiet, the quietest of the young people on the "Balloon," Nora and Brenda and the two sophomores, or rather juniors, kept up a gay chattering. The scraps of conversation that floated to Mrs. Barlow's ears often drew an involuntary smile.

"It may have been so in my day," she said to herself, "but still I do think that the young people of the present day are more frivolous than they need be. They ought to be an improvement over their parents. Surely their advantages are greater. I wonder if Brenda will ever take life



seriously." Then, as a peal of laughter came from the quartette in the bow, Mrs. Barlow herself smiled again.

Amy, meanwhile, had turned from poetic thoughts to the more practical. One was the cost of the row-boat that she and Fritz had hired by the hour soon after reaching Marblehead in the early afternoon. They had meant to keep it an hour, or an hour and a half at the most, but now Amy trembled to think what the bill would be, and she wondered if the man from whom they had hired the boat, from their long absence might not think that some accident had befallen them, or that they had made way with the boat. Then there was the question of her mother; what would she think if they failed to meet her! Half-past five was to be the time, and how strange it would seem to Mrs. Redmond to wait out there by the Fort looking vainly for Amy and Fritz. But still, even her reflection on this did not prevent her enjoying the present pleasure. Tom had taken up his mandolin, and Philip his banjo, and the quartette was singing one college chorus after another.

"Said the pussy cat to the owl, oh, what 'll you take to drink,  
Said the pussy cat to the owl, oh, what 'll you take to drink,  
Since you are so very kind, I 'll take a bottle of ink."

Brenda had her camera under her arm, and aimed rather extravagantly now at distant objects, a boat at full sail, or a rocky headland, now at some of her friends on the boat. The latter were often in shadow, and there was no doubt that Brenda was wasting a great deal of film. But economy had never been one of Brenda's strong points.



"The racers are coming in, the racers are coming in!" cried Fritz, excitedly, from his place on the deck near the stern, where he had been watching every movement of the scattered fleet.

The two leading boats soon appeared, close together, with all their kites drawing beautifully. They made a very close finish, the winner only crossing the line a few seconds ahead of her rival. As soon as they crossed the line, both boats luffed up in the wind, and all light sails were taken in. They then proceeded slowly to their own moorings, while the others came in not many minutes later. The finish line was between two flags moored in the harbor, so that the judges on the piazzas of the Club-house could tell exactly when a boat crossed the line. When the winning-boat crossed the line, a gun from the Club-house sounded, but this was the only noise that marked the end of the race.

"It is n't quite as exciting as I thought it would be," said Julia, "I suppose one needs to know a great deal about boats to feel much interest in a sailing race."

"I tell you what—you ought to have been here this morning for the water sports; they would have been exciting enough for you, I am sure."

"Oh, tell us about them!" cried Nora. "I've never happened to see them myself."

"Well, this morning they had a hobby-horse race. The hobby-horses were barrels, with a long stick run through them—a head at one end, a tail at the other, and the men who rode them wore bathing-suits, and the barrels rolled



over, and they were tumbled in the water. Then there were tub races,—the men, you know, kneel in the tubs, and paddle with their hands; and there was water baseball—but there, you've missed the sports, and the only thing is to make up your minds to be in Marblehead Harbor next Fourth of July, and take in everything."

"There, that's the 'Crusoe' at her moorings," exclaimed Fritz, who had been watching a yacht some distance away.

"Then we must bid you good-bye, Philip," said Mrs. Barlow, rising. "Cousin Edward may feel that we have been away too long."

"I wish that you could stay longer; but I know that you would call us altogether too selfish if we kept you longer. But we won't send you home in the launch. You shall go, two by two, in the row-boat, and that will keep some of you here at least a half-hour longer."

Thus it happened that while Tom rowed Brenda and Nora out to the "Crusoe," Mrs. Barlow and Julia lingered a little longer on the "Balloon." Amy and Fritz took their departure before Tom returned, with many thanks to Philip for the pleasant afternoon.

To Amy's surprise when they went to pay for the boat, the bill was much less than she had feared.

"But even if it had been more," said Fritz, "I could have stood it. We've had more than our money's worth of fun, haven't we?"

Promptly at half-past five the two young people were ready to meet Mrs. Redmond at the appointed place.

They ate the luncheon which she had brought with a



good appetite. The cakes and lemonade that had been served them on the "Balloon," had satisfied their hunger only for the time being. For the picnic repast which Mrs. Redmond had prepared they chose a sheltered nook near Fort Sewall, and they sat there on the heights until after the sunset gun, watching with delight the illumination of the yachts in the harbor, and the fireworks sent up from the shore. Mrs. Redmond listened with great interest to their description of the "Balloon," and rejoiced that Amy had had this red-letter day.

The Rockley young people wound up the day very delightfully on the "Crusoe." At Mr. Elston's urgent invitation, Tom and Philip deserted the "Balloon" for the larger boat.

A few minutes before sunset the girls noticed a sailor standing by the halyards of each yacht within sight. Then when the sunset gun was heard, every flag was pulled down, and the night-hawks went up in their place. Gradually at the bow of each yacht appeared its light, and, as it grew darker, other lights were seen in the rigging. Some of the larger boats had their whole decks outlined with electric lights, and the whole scene was one of great beauty.

When the girls expressed their admiration for the electric lights, Philip regretted that they had n't an electric plant on the "Balloon."

"There's only one little storage battery for the light in the binnacle. But who knows what we may have next year. Anything to please you," he whispered mischiev-



ously to Julia, for he knew that remarks of this kind always teased her a little.

Soon all the cottages facing the harbor, as well as the great club houses, were gleaming with Japanese lanterns, bonfires blazed up here and there, and the sky was almost aflame with rockets and other fireworks.

"It's too beautiful to last!" cried Julia.

"Well, as we won't see the end of it, we can imagine that it is going to last. Come, girls, come, we must bid good-night to cousin Edward."

So, in a short time, the Rockley party, girls, guests, and Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, found themselves driving homeward along a dark road. The Fourth was over.



## X

### TWO CALLS

JUST after The Fourth came one of those scorching weeks when even at the seashore people had all they could do to keep cool. Until late in the afternoon the girls stayed in the darkened house, with the windows well shaded by blinds and awnings. Only toward evening would they go down to the sea, and then how delicious the plunge in the cool water, the rapid race along the sands when they came out, and the ten or fifteen minutes while they sat on the beach!

“When are we going to call on Amy?” asked Julia one day, as the three sat there resting for a few minutes before proceeding to the bath-house.

“As soon as the weather is cooler. I don’t see anyway why she should n’t call on us sometime on her way to the beach. She comes over nearly every day. I don’t think that girls of our age ought to be too ceremonious.”

Julia and Nora laughed at Brenda’s rather plaintive tone.

“The warm weather seems to have got into your voice. But I thought that you were rather a believer in ceremony, Brenda. I’ve often heard you scold about girls who did not return calls properly.”



"Oh, in summer it's different! We can't be expected to be polite when the thermometer keeps in the neighborhood of a hundred or two all the time."

"Yes, but still you could drive toward the end of any afternoon, and Amy struck me as the kind of a girl one would n't wish to offend."

"The idea! a girl who lives in a little bit of a house like the one she lives in. Oh, no, she won't be so easily offended!"

This seemed to be the old Brenda of the preceding winter, and Julia looked at her cousin in some surprise.

Presently, when no reply had been made to her last speech, Brenda continued, "But I'm perfectly ready to go to-morrow, for you see I ought to take back that 'Faery Queen.' I caught you looking at it this morning, and the next thing you'll be wanting to read it aloud to me. I could n't stand that, and so the best way to prevent it will be to take the book back."

"Very well," said Julia, "to return the book will be a very good excuse for calling."

"Why do we need an excuse?"

"Well, Amy has n't actually invited us, only it certainly would be the proper thing to do."

"But would n't it be just as proper for her to call after having been out on the yacht?" asked Nora.

"Yes, but I have an idea that she is timid about coming. You see we are summer people, and she —"

"She just lives up on that back road all the year. Just fancy! It must be terribly dreary."



"She is n't at all a dreary sort of girl," rejoined Julia. "She seems to have read everything worth reading. I suppose that's because she has studied at home with her mother. Next year she's going to the High School at Salem, she told me."

"I'd like her very much, more than almost any one I know," said Brenda, "if she were n't quite so snubbing. I wish you could have seen how shocked she looked when she found that I admired the novels of 'The Countess.' Really I did feel small when she handed back one to me that I had dropped over there on the rocks."

"It served you right, Brenda Barlow; those novels are trash, and I believe that you know that they are. Why I don't profess to read very deep things, but I would n't waste my time over 'The Countess.' Besides, I thought that your mother did n't care to have you do it; has n't she forbidden you?"

Brenda flushed a little angrily. "My mother never forbids me to do anything. She says that I must learn the difference between right and wrong myself."

"Come now, Brenda, she does n't expect you to choose the wrong, does she?"

Nora could venture farther with Brenda than most of her friends. But this time Brenda was almost offended with her.

"As I told Julia the other day, if my mother wishes, she can make a bonfire of all my novels; there are n't so very many of them. They're all there in plain sight on my book-shelf. I should n't think of hiding them."



"If I were you, I would n't read them either. They're so silly, so untrue to life."

"How do you know, Nora? You've never been in England, or Ireland either. The scene of some of them is in Ireland. That's what I like about them. There's nothing common or ordinary about them. Almost everyone lives in a castle, or ought to, because some of them are people who have been kept out of their own. But the stories always end well, — that is, almost always, — and when they happen to be sad, really they would make you cry. I've cried and cried over some of them."

"Really, Brenda, I'd try to find something better worth crying over," said Nora, "something better than a mere trashy novel."

"Oh, but the people in these books of 'The Countess' seem just like real people, and the girls are always such perfect beauties that when things go wrong, you feel terribly for them. But generally they get their fortune back again, or they marry a rich man; I hate sad endings."

"Give me the 'Faery Queen' every time," cried Nora, "though I've never read it. I must talk to your friend Amy about it."

The result of the conversation was that a day or two later the three girls set off to make the call on Amy. Brenda was inclined to go — as Nora expressed it — "in style," that is, wearing her best India silk gown, and her most elaborate hat. But Julia and Nora finally persuaded her that it would be much better to go in simpler array, so that the call might not seem too formal. The day which



they chose was the first cool day after the long, hot spell, and they were able to go in cloth walking skirts, with pretty silk waists and fresh gloves to give them a more formal aspect than was usual in their summer costumes.

Brenda had yielded to the other girls in the matter of walking.

"Really, we have been almost like prisoners during this warm season; I have hardly set foot off the piazza," said Nora; "I'm dying for fresh air and exercise."

"But you've been driving nearly every evening."

"Oh, yes, Brenda, but still that is not the same thing at all. A long walk will do us good. Do say yes, for I'm sure that you'll enjoy it, too."

"I'd rather go on my wheel."

"Oh, it's too warm for that, besides we'd get so very dusty. Come, Julia's in favor of walking, so you'll have to give in."

"Oh, very well, as long as the sun isn't very bright. I hate to walk in the sun."

The walk toward the road where Amy lived was a pleasant one. It lay along a cross road that was little more than a lane. The trees on each side almost met overhead, and along the sides was the thick growth of flowering bushes which always surprises visitors to the Massachusetts North Shore.

"I never can get used to finding all these lovely things so near the sea-shore," cried Julia; "why, one could almost stand with one foot in the ocean, and the other resting on a bank of wild flowers such as would be looked for



only in the country. See how many different kinds I have here," and Julia began to tell them off: "wild roses, St. John's-wort. Why don't you gather some, Brenda; they'd be lovely on the table this evening."

"Perhaps I will on my way home. I don't want to take off my gloves now. They're so very hard to fasten."

Nora, however, followed Julia's example, and they soon had two large bunches of wild flowers, including more than a dozen different kinds.

Amy saw the three friends as they approached the house. She was hulling strawberries, and this, you know, is a kind of work that stains the fingers rather hopelessly. She was seated on the side-steps with the bowl on her lap, as the girls drew near, and her first impulse was almost to throw it with its ruddy contents one side. Sensible girl though she was, she did not like to have them find her engaged in what she considered a half-menial occupation. Instead of yielding to the foolish impulse, however, she did the more sensible thing, and advanced with the bowl in her hand. She knew that they must have seen her from the road, and had she permitted them to ring the door-bell, she knew that they would have had to wait some time before she could enter the house to answer it.

"Oh, can't we sit here with you?" cried Brenda cordially, "there's room for one of us on the step, and those two dear little chairs," — and she pointed to two at some distance back of the house, — "will be just the thing for the others."



Before she had finished speaking, Nora and Julia had brought forward the chairs. They were painted a dark-green, the same shade as the doors and fence. Soon the four girls were chatting as gayly as only girls of fifteen can chat, and Amy went on with her task as composedly as if her visitors had been old friends. They talked of the jolly time they had had on The Fourth; and Brenda gave Amy the special invitation which Mrs. Barlow had sent, that she should come down soon to Rockley to spend the day.

"If my mother can spare me, and I know she will, I shall be perfectly delighted," responded Amy. Her face beamed with pleasure. It was not often that she had an invitation of this kind, and she knew that a day with Brenda and her friends would be very delightful.

"How fine it must be," exclaimed Nora, "to be so useful in a family that you could n't accept an invitation until you knew whether or not you could be spared! In all my life I've never reached that height," said Nora.

There was always a ring of sincerity in Nora's voice that even strangers recognized, and Amy saw that Nora meant just what she said.

"I hope that I did n't sound as if I thought myself of too much importance," she said. "But you know we do not keep any regular girl, and we have an old cousin living with us who needs much attention, and sometimes, when mamma is busy, I feel as if I ought not to leave her."

This was rather a long speech for Amy, and she was not in the habit of explaining her affairs so fully to people.



But in thinking about her acquaintance with these girls, she had decided that frankness was much the best thing.

"They must know that I am poor, or I would n't be living in this little house, and they might as well know that I am not in the least ashamed of it." Now all this was in the line of the training that Amy had received from her mother. Yet I am not sure but that Mrs. Redmond might have thought that she was going a little farther than was absolutely necessary.

"There," said Brenda, when Amy had finished speaking, "there is one thing that I'm almost sure that you will have to come to our house for, that is, if you ever wish to see it again, — your 'Faery Queen.'"

"Why, yes," said Amy, "I had almost forgotten it."

"Well, I meant to bring it to-day. Why I started out to call on you almost expressly to bring it! How in the world did I forget it, Julia?"

"It does seem rather strange for you to forget anything, Brenda."

"Oh, but it does n't matter," interposed Amy.

"On the whole, I'm not sorry, because you'll be sure now to come for it."

"I'd be sure to accept your invitation. But now I want you to come into the house for a while; these chairs must be very uncomfortable."

Showing the three callers into the pleasant sitting-room, Amy excused herself to take the tray with the bowl of berries and the saucer of hulls out to the kitchen. She returned, plaintively holding up her hands.



"But the stain of the strawberry hangs o'er me still."

"That sounded like poetry," said Julia. "Are you a poet, as well as a housekeeper?" Julia was two years older than Amy, and there may have seemed to be just the least tinge of patronage, or older girlishness in her voice. Whatever it was, it caused Amy to answer a rather curt "No," and made the other girls exchange glances. Amy herself was almost immediately ashamed of her momentary petulance. How often had her mother warned her that she must curb her quick temper, and here she was ready to flare up at — why, at nothing! As amends for this, she now made great efforts to entertain her guests. She showed them a portfolio containing her mother's watercolor sketches of wild flowers; and when the girls expressed their admiration, she added, "Mother does n't like to do flower and nature sketches."

"Oh, I should think she'd be just crazy to; why these flowers are just perfect!" Brenda's admiration was very genuine.

"Perhaps there is something else that she does even better," suggested Julia.

"Well, I think that her portraits are better; she can make the funniest little sketches of people. Sometime, perhaps, she'll let me show you some that she has done. Those are miniatures of hers on the mantelpiece."

Again came a series of "ohs" and "ahs" of admiration from the girls.

"Don't say it is n't like me," cried Amy, as Brenda and Nora bent over one of them. "I know that I am idealized



in it; but when I feel low-spirited, I gaze at it, and try to imagine that I look like that."

"Low-spirited," — surely that was a rather old-fashioned word for a girl of fifteen; at least Julia thought so, as she stole a rather searching glance at Amy.

Cousin Joan, from her little room upstairs, heard the laughing voices, and wondered who these visitors could be. Amy was not in the habit of entertaining young girls, and the invalid spent a long half hour speculating about them. Before they left, it had been arranged that Amy was to come over to Rockley early the following week.

"No, you needn't send for me," she had protested when Brenda said that Thomas and the carryall should come for her. "In the morning I should enjoy the walk. Perhaps in the afternoon you will feel like driving me home."

"Why, of course," said Brenda. "I wouldn't think of letting you come back alone."

Just as the three started to bid Amy good-bye, Mrs. Redmond came back from Salem, where she had had to go on business. She was pleased to meet the girls about whom Amy had told her so much, and she quickly gave her consent to Amy's acceptance of the invitation.

"Amy, Amy!" called cousin Joan, as the three friends waved their farewell as they disappeared down the road. "Amy, I wish that you'd come right upstairs; I've been in an almost suffering state. It must be suppertime; but you were so much taken up with your company that of course you hadn't a thought for me."



Fortunately the truthful Amy did not feel called upon to make a reply. If she had said anything, it would probably have been that she really had not thought of cousin Joan during the stay of her visitors.

To make up for her negligence, she now moved about the room quietly, adjusting the blinds, arranging the pillows, and doing everything that she could to make her comfortable. She also gratified the old lady's curiosity by describing the girls who had just left, and she made her account so entertaining that cousin Joan was evidently gratified, although she sniffed a little as if slightly scornful, and said, "Brenda Barlow, Mr. Robert Barlow's daughter! Oh, yes, it will only make you discontented to know people like that. You'll be wanting to do as they do, and you can't. If I was your mother, I wouldn't let you visit them. You can't have a carriage and pair, and a yacht, and all those things."

Amy, for a moment, was tempted to make some scoffing reply, but her second thoughts were better, and remembering that cousin Joan was shut out from most of the pleasant things of life, she hastened downstairs to prepare the invalid's tea; and when she and her mother had finished their own evening meal downstairs, she returned to cousin Joan's room to read to her for an hour.

Cousin Joan was an inheritance that Mrs. Redmond and Amy were hardly entitled to. She was a half-cousin of Mrs. Redmond's father, and, to be perfectly frank, Mrs. Redmond was not bound to her by any strong ties of affection or gratitude. In her own girlhood, the mother



of Amy had seen this relative only two or three times, as her home was in a distant state. But about the time of Mr. Redmond's death, cousin Joan had been left a widow with a small income, — so small that it was hardly enough for her to live on. Returning to her native place, she had suggested to Mrs. Redmond that it might be a good plan for them to live together. "My board will be something to you, and I will have more of a home than I could in a boarding-house. Besides, I can look after Amy when you are busy, and I'm quite a good hand at needlework."

The plan really had appealed to Mrs. Redmond, and, if everything had gone as they planned, cousin Joan, instead of being a burden, would have been a great help. But, first of all, through a bad investment, her income was reduced about half. "Of course, if you say so, Lucy, I'll go to the poorhouse," she had said, with tears in her eyes; and of course Mrs. Redmond had said that she must not talk so foolishly.

"You are company for me, and you can do many little things for me. The loss of your money needn't make the least difference, as far as I am concerned."

But one trouble after another came to cousin Joan. First, her general health failed, and a good part of her little stipend went to pay doctors' bills. Then her eyes became almost useless, and she could no longer sew. But it was not Mrs. Redmond who complained, nor even Amy, whose feet grew very tired sometimes, running up and down stairs at the sick woman's behest.



"She has really no one else to live with," Mrs. Redmond had said once or twice to people who had suggested that the care of an invalid was too great for the mother and daughter to bear without aid. "She has really no one else to live with, and it would be very hard for one who has seen better days to live in an institution."

"Sometimes I wish that she had never seen better days, she has so much to say about them. But that wouldn't be so bad if she would n't try to interfere with me. Really, it seems sometimes as if she thought that this was her house, and we only boarders."

"Remember, my dear, that she is an old woman," Mrs. Redmond had replied, "and that it is very hard to be old and sick and poor."

"I know that it's hard to be poor," Amy had answered, "but —"

"But then be thankful that you are not old and sick, too, and be considerate for those who are."

It was no wonder that the three girls, after their visit to Amy, said that they thought that Mrs. Redmond had a face that seemed "full of goodness." This was Nora's rather quaint wording, and the others agreed with her, while Julia added, "You might not call her beautiful, Aunt Anna, and yet it seemed to me that a very beautiful disposition showed in every line of her face."

"And she must be very talented, too; her pictures were lovely," added Brenda.

"Amy Redmond?" queried Mr. Elston, who happened to be dining with the Barlows that evening, "is that



the name of the young girl you had with you on the Fourth?"

"Yes, is n't it a pretty name."

For a moment Mr. Elston's mind seemed to be wandering. Then he replied, half absent-mindedly, "It's an odd combination."

Now, if time permitted, it would be pleasant to give you a full account of the day that Amy spent at Brenda's house. To Amy, it was like a glimpse of Fairy Land, first, to be relieved for a whole day of all domestic care, and second, to have a glimpse of a household living as luxuriously as that of Mr. and Mrs. Barlow. To Amy at least the large house with its furnishings and decorations so suited to summer comfort, the three or four domestics who kept things in running order, the well-shorn lawn and the garden beds full of flowers, made a whole that seemed almost too delightful to be real. She noted the many simple, though well-chosen pictures on the wall, the low book-shelves filled with books, and when she sat on Brenda's little balcony looking seaward, she said in her rather serious tone, "I wonder if you know how fortunate you are to have a home so beautiful as this! I have never seen anything like it. The hedge in front always hid it from view, and I did not dream that there was such a fairy palace behind it."

Brenda laughed in her lightest-hearted way.

"Oh, you ought to see some of the houses farther down the Shore, at Beverly, or Pride's! Our grounds are insignificant compared with Edith's, and our house



could almost be set inside hers. But of course I know that ours is very attractive. It's a good situation."

"I should say so," replied Amy; "you certainly ought to be very happy."

"That sounds as if you would like to add 'and very good,'" said Brenda, again smiling. "But you'll find, if you know me well, that I'm not particularly good."

"I shouldn't wonder if you were good enough," rejoined Amy. Although she may have seen some things to criticise in Brenda, she still had a strong liking for this new friend of hers. Brenda, on her part, had the rather strange sensation of wishing to gain the approbation of another girl. It was not the same feeling that she had sometimes had at school when she found herself trying by various little methods (in which liberality in spending money at recess, and generosity in buying birthday and Christmas presents played a large part) to attain a reputation for popularity. Even had she known that the next day would be the birthday of Amy, she would hardly have dared to make her a present. But she did feel anxious to stand well in her estimation. It was on this account, probably, that she threw an uneasy glance at her visitor, as the latter paused for a moment, in passing through her room, to look at her book-shelves. What if she should take down one of those paper-bound volumes! A regret flashed through her mind that she had not put them away in her closet.

But although Brenda had bidden Amy make herself perfectly at home, the latter would not have ventured



to take down one of the books without a special invitation. The glance that she gave them was so rapid that she did not read the titles. Brenda gave a sigh of relief as they passed from the room. She had begun to question her own wisdom in keeping "The Countess" in so conspicuous a place.

If Amy enjoyed the day at Rockley, the three girls and Mrs. Barlow were delighted with her.

"Really," said Mrs. Barlow, "you have told me things about this neighborhood that I have never known, although I have spent so many summers here. I shall never drive through Swampscott now without thinking of Lady Humphrey. You say that the name of the long street running to Marblehead came from Lady Humphrey, and that she and her husband once owned all the country about us. I dare say that you know more about the town of Marblehead itself than Brenda does."

"Oh, yes, I'm sure of that," interposed Brenda. "She told me quantities of interesting things the other day on the 'Balloon.' I begin to feel almost like Julia, I am so anxious to explore it."

"Then you will probably approve of a plan I have had come through my mind while Amy has been talking. It seems to me that it would be delightful if she would go with you some day soon to Marblehead, and tell you what she knows about some of the old houses."

Mrs. Barlow looked inquiringly at Amy, and the young girl responded brightly, "I should be very glad indeed to do it."



"Oh, yes," added Brenda. "We could have lots of fun out of it, I am sure."

"Of course you know, Mrs. Barlow, that I simply know the things that are in books that I have read, or that my mother has read to me. I can tell Brenda where to find the same things. Perhaps she would rather read them for herself."

"Oh, no, indeed; I've always noticed that people who write history manage to make their books frightfully uninteresting. I'm afraid that I shouldn't know much, if I had to dig it out of books myself."

"Ah, Brenda, why will you make yourself out to be so much worse than you are. Amy will think that Boston school girls receive a strange education. Some of us *do* like history," and Nora looked appealingly from Brenda to Amy.

The outcome of this suggestion of Mrs. Barlow's was the appointing of a day for the four girls to spend together at Marblehead. Brenda was delighted when she found that no older person was to accompany them.

"Marblehead is a quiet place," said her mother, "and if I did not believe that you could be trusted, I should not think of letting you go, older person or no older person with you."

"Why, Aunt Anna, am I not an older person?" asked Julia, "if you like, I will take charge of everything."

"No, I thank you," interposed Brenda, "you need n't take charge of me. Mother's plan of letting us take care of ourselves is the best one."



Julia saw at once that she had made a mistake, since Brenda had not yet outgrown her rather childish fear that some one might try to have undue authority. She therefore hastened to say, —

“It is you, Brenda, who must have charge of me. You know ever so much more about this coast than I do.”

“Well, I expect you all to learn a great deal,” said Mrs. Barlow, “otherwise I should not encourage your going to Marblehead.”



## XI

### THE PILGRIMAGE

THE only person who seemed to disapprove of the intimacy between Amy and the three girls of the Barlow household was Fritz. It was hardly to be expected that a boy could be included in expeditions in which the girls would outnumber him, four to one. In fact, had he been regularly invited, Fritz would probably have declined to go about with a lot of girls. But he did resent the fact that Amy had been taken away from him. Whenever she could be spared from home, she was sure to go down to the beach, or over to Mrs. Barlow's house, to spend an hour or two with Brenda. Really, it was unbearable! This at least was the point of view of Fritz, who began to feel rather aggrieved when on three successive days he had failed to find Amy at home when he called. On one of these occasions he had run upstairs to talk with cousin Joan, and he had found her equally dissatisfied. She did not see why Amy need be always going off for amusement. "I'm sure she has her books, and her piano, and when her mother is out, I am always here, so that she can't say that she has n't any one to talk to." Poor cousin Joan! in all her life she had never been able to put herself in the place of any one else. She expected the other person, old or young,



to see things exactly as she did, that is, to stand in her place.

But one good thing came from Fritz's visit to her. He took up a book which lay on the little table beside her, and offered to read for a half hour. The half hour lengthened to an hour, and at its end cousin Joan decided that after all there might be a little good in boys, — at least in some boys, and she almost smiled on Fritz when he laid down the "History of Our Own Times," after his hour of work. Possibly he would not have read so long, and so willingly, had not the book itself really interested him. He found it surprisingly entertaining "for a history," as he said to cousin Joan, and privately he resolved to find out if his uncle had n't a copy at home.

"I wonder if Mrs. Redmond is very busy now," he said, when he had finished.

"She's in the studio; you might go and see," answered cousin Joan; and Fritz excused himself to find Amy's mother. Though dignified by the name "studio," the room where Mrs. Redmond worked was a small apartment, and its only really artistic property was its northern window. This was rather large, and in the good light Mrs. Redmond spent many hours working every day. Many of her flower sketches, fastened to colored cartridge paper, were tacked around the wall, and the easel at which she was working, had a thoroughly business-like air.

She welcomed Fritz cordially, and laughed at him a little when, almost without meaning to do so, he disclosed



the fact that he was rather jealous of the new friends, who took Amy away from him.

"Amy cares just as much for you as ever; but it is so pleasant for her to have the companionship of girls of her own age that she cannot be blamed for spending all the time she can with them."

"I shouldn't suppose that you could spare her so much," murmured Fritz, a little crossly. "Now when I am around, she can go on with whatever she is doing, just the same. But I rather think that Miss Barlow would be surprised if she were asked to wait around and help with the dishes. Of course I never mind things like that."

Mrs. Redmond again laughed at the doleful tone and expression assumed by Fritz.

"You are certainly not feeling very happy to-day, are you?"

"Well, it's no fun. I came over this afternoon expressly to invite Amy to go down to Lynn with me to-morrow. My uncle has an errand there. But I suppose that it is n't any use for me to ask her. She probably has an engagement with Miss Barlow."

"Well, Fritz, it does happen to be the day that they have chosen for their expedition to Marblehead. Amy calls it a Pilgrimage, and she expects to enjoy it very much. She is going to point out most of the objects of interest, or, in other words, the famous houses to the girls."

"She'd better read them some of her own poetry. They'd probably enjoy it."



"Oh, no, indeed, I'm sure that she would n't do that. Amy is very sensitive about her own verses. She hardly ever reads any of them to me."

"Well, then I'm rather lucky. I have several things that she has given me. You know I think it's just great for a girl to be able to write the way she does. Well, I suppose that it's no use to wait for her, especially as she can't go with me," and Fritz, bidding Mrs. Redmond good-bye, went downstairs. As he passed the door of the sitting-room, a sudden thought seized him, and he went to the little desk belonging to Amy, which stood in one corner. A large book lay on top of it, and, opening the covers, he took out several loose sheets of paper.

"The very thing," he exclaimed, and he folded up the sheets, and placed them in his pocket.

Now on the Thursday of their expedition to Marblehead, the four girls were especially favored by the weather. It was one of those gray days that occasionally come in summer; the kind of day when a photographer knows the instantaneous views are out of question, and yet the kind of day that persons fond of out-door life welcome heartily. They know that they can walk or ride or wheel almost as comfortably as in autumn.

"Are all the young people in Marblehead dead?" asked Nora, frivolously, as they stood at the head of a narrow hilly street.

"What a question!" Brenda's voice sounded just a little impatient.



"But now really I am in earnest. You must have noticed how many old men and old women we see, and quantities of children. But I haven't seen a really young-looking man or woman either yet."

"Just wait until noon. When the whistle sounds, you'll see them pouring out of the factories. You know that there are a great many factories in Marblehead. Then, of course, it's such an old place that a great many people like to go away to seek their fortunes in Lynn, or some of the cities."

"I'm sure I'd live somewhere else, if I had to spend all the year in Marblehead," said Brenda, and then, when the others laughed at her, she looked offended until they pointed out the bull that she had made.

"Don't you think it's a fascinating place?" asked Julia.

"No, I honestly don't. That is, I prefer places where the houses are bright and cheerful-looking, freshly painted, you know. Why, these houses look as if they hadn't had a coat of paint in a hundred years!"

"She's pining for Queen Anne cottages, all red and green and yallery," said Nora apologetically to Amy.

"Well, on a gray day, Marblehead does look rather dingier than usual," said Amy.

"Oh, I know what Marblehead's like in all kinds of weather!" said Brenda. "I can't count the times I've been here on my way to the boat. I never thought that it was beautiful, and I don't think I'll change my mind so very much, even at the end of this pilgrimage."



But I'm willing to get all the improvement I can out of this trip. That's what we're here for, aren't we?" and she turned inquiringly toward Amy.

Amy did not know exactly whether or not it was worth while to be offended with Brenda. Or rather she could not tell whether or not Brenda was in earnest.

"It was your mother who suggested our coming in this way. Of course I shall be glad to tell you anything I can about places. But I don't wish to make myself tiresome."

"Of course you won't make yourself tiresome. Brenda did n't mean that."

"No, I really did n't, though I won't pretend that I am quite as much interested in history as Nora and Julia. They're regular cormorants."

"What in the world is that?" asked Nora, in an aside, while Brenda looked rather proud of her success in using a particularly uncommon word.

"I'm afraid that you'll never tell us anything unless we ask questions; you are altogether too modest," said Julia. "So, as I am the oldest, I will begin. Why is that house standing there below us in the middle of the street? Were they short of sidewalks?"

"That's the old Town House," replied Amy. "You can see the date there over the door, 1727. They still hold town meetings there, I believe, though they can't be as exciting as in the days of the Revolution when men like Elbridge Gerry, and Jeremiah Lee, and perhaps Muford himself used to speak there."



"I never heard of a single one of those men, did you, Nora?" and Brenda lowered her voice a little so that Amy might not know the depths of her ignorance. Nora shook her head, although whether in assent or contradiction it was not easy to tell. They had now moved nearer the Town House, and lingered there to study it more closely.

"Judge Story was born in that house where the apothecary's shop is, — the father of the artist Story," explained Amy.

"Oh, yes, the grandfather-in-law of Emma Eames; now don't say that I didn't know anything about any one in Marblehead," said Nora, so appealingly that the others laughed.

Near the Story House, Amy paused for a moment. "There, I think that we'd better go up this street while we're fresh. There's a great deal to see up here," and she led the way with Julia, while the other two followed at some little distance.

"Is she going to draw money?" asked Nora, as Amy and Julia entered a large house, the lower story of which was a bank. Hastening their steps, they found them both admiring the wall paper on the wall above a handsome flight of stairs.

"It was made in England, and looks almost as if painted by hand," said Amy. "Colonel Lee, who lived here at the time of the Revolution, was a great patriot. When this house was built, there was said to be no other as expensive and fine in all the British Colonies."



"Was Washington ever entertained here?" asked Nora, demurely.

"Yes," replied Amy.

"And Lafayette, too?"

"Why, yes."

"I thought so. I've been in historic towns before, and Washington and Lafayette have always been entertained in the handsomest houses."

"Well, Colonel Lee was naturally honored by Washington, because he had been so devoted to the American cause. You see, ever so many of the Marblehead merchants were Loyalists. Why, Colonel Lee himself had a brother-in-law, Benjamin Marston,—that is his house up there at the top of the hill,—who was exiled to Nova Scotia because he was on the King's side. Another brother-in-law, King Hooper, as he was called on account of his great wealth, had a large banquet-hall in the top of his house, and my mother says that she can remember, not so very long ago, a coat-of-arms there over the door. This part of Washington Street, especially up here on the hill, seems to have been the Court End of the town,—at least, all the handsomest houses are here," said Amy.

"Is every old house standing that ever was built in Marblehead?" asked Brenda.

"Well I'm not going to point them all out to you, so don't be worried," answered Amy, good-naturedly.

"Show us one that has some romantic story connected with it."

"I'm afraid that there are not so very many. The



houses of very rich people were just about as unromantic a hundred and twenty years ago as they are to-day," responded Amy. "But there's the old Bowden House over there on the hill. Michael Bowden was a Loyalist, but he was n't as unpopular as some of them, and so when another Loyalist sought refuge in his house from an angry mob, he promised to protect him. Well, the crowd rushed into the house, and Mrs. Bowden tried to keep them from going farther than the sitting-room.

" 'I can assure you, gentlemen,' she said, 'that the man you seek is not under my roof. If you make any greater disturbance, you may cause the death of my sick daughter.'

"So the citizens did not go any farther. They believed Mrs. Bowden."

"But the man was in the house, was n't he?"

"Well, it seems that he was on the roof, hiding behind one of the big chimneys. So that in one way Mrs. Bowden told the truth."

"I did n't know there were so many Loyalists in this part of the world," said Nora, as Julia pointed out a house on the opposite side of the Square which Amy said had belonged to Benjamin Watson, a prominent Tory.

"Oh, well, my mother says that Marblehead was rich then, that Boston was the only town that was richer, and some of the merchants, fearing that their business would be disturbed, were on the side of England."

"Where is the very oldest house of all?" asked Julia; "these up here look almost too comfortable and modern, even if they are more than one hundred years old."



"Then I must take you down to the old Tucker House, built—" and Amy referred to her little note-book,— "about 1660." Her mother had advised her to write a few dates and facts with which to refresh her memory, as she guided her friends around the town.

"Well, it isn't much to look at," said Brenda; "it's shabby, and it is no more distinguished-looking than the other old houses around here. The very oldest house ought to be different in some way."

"Somebody told me that the very first settler, who came here in the winter of 1629, lived in a fish-hogshead which he set up in a sheltered cove, near Peach's Point. Now if that house had been preserved, I fancy that it would have suited you. It would have been so unlike anything else here."

Thus they wandered about, these four girls, each finding something that had some special interest for her. Julia was very much impressed by the fact that James Mugford's house was still to be seen ("the very house in which he and his young wife set up housekeeping"); and when Brenda and Nora admitted that they did not know what Mugford had done to distinguish himself, she told them the story which every patriotic boy and girl should know. She told how Mugford, in his little schooner "Franklin," succeeded in the spring of 1776 in capturing the British transport "Hope," loaded with ammunition and military stores that were of the greatest value to the Americans. He took his prize safely into Boston, and then started for home. There was a British fleet lying then in Nantasket Roads, and of course they kept watch for Mugford. When part



way home, the "Franklin" unfortunately ran aground, and this gave the British their opportunity to attack. Although Mugford and his men drove them off, and saved their vessel, the enemy succeeded in fatally wounding Mugford. His body was carried back to Marblehead and buried with great honors.

"You can see his grave up in the Burying Hill," said Amy; "it is marked by a stone, and there's a monument at the other end of the town."

While Amy was talking, Nora appeared to be thinking deeply. At length she exclaimed, "There, I have it; there's a Marblehead monument in Boston, at least it's to a Marblehead man. It's in the Park in Commonwealth Avenue. I remember when I was a little girl, fond of spelling out inscriptions, I used to wonder what Marblehead was. It didn't seem to me like a place. I wonder whose the statue was on that monument! It's a kind of Continental looking figure."

"Oh, that is General Glover; I've seen that monument myself on some of my trips to town."

"General Glover?" Nora showed her curiosity very plainly. "Well, he started as Colonel John Glover, and joined Washington at Cambridge. His regiment was made up wholly of Marblehead men, all except seven. Washington Irving called them the 'amphibious regiment of Marblehead fishermen.' They knew more about boats than any of the other soldiers, and these Marbleheaders were the men who rowed Washington across the Delaware on that Christmas night of 1776."



"Is General Glover's house standing, too?" asked Nora, in a tone of mock-seriousness.

"Certainly," replied Amy. "I ought to have pointed it out to you. Well, there may be a chance by-and-by."

"There," said Brenda, hardly waiting until Amy had finished. "It's just come to me. I knew that there was something romantic that I had read about Marblehead. 'Agnes Surriage,'—she's much more romantic than any of the people you've been talking about," and she laid her hand playfully first on Julia's arm, and then on Nora's.

"You're so down on novels that I don't suppose that either of you has read 'Agnes Surriage.'"

"Oh, we know all about her, don't worry about that," rejoined Nora.

"Yes, I dare say you've read some scrap about her in a history; but that's very different from the novel. That's one of the most interesting books I ever read."

"More interesting than 'The Countess' books?" asked Julia, mischievously.

"Oh, well, of course not quite," responded Brenda, in the same spirit, while Nora chanted expressively, —

" 'Tis like some poet's pictured trance  
His idle rhymes recite, —  
This old New England-born romance  
Of Agnes and the knight."

"I could recite any amount more, but we haven't time now."

"There's no doubt that you can recite poetry very well, Nora," said Brenda, "and I'm glad that you liked Agnes."



"Oh, I have read the novel, too; I read it after we visited the North End last winter, with Miss South."

"Before we go home to-day, perhaps we can go up to the place where the Fountain Inn used to stand. It's some little distance up the hill. There's a kind of interesting looking pump over a well there, and they suppose that the inn was named from it."

"From the pump?"

"No, from the well," replied Amy, without a shade of annoyance at Brenda's interruption.

"Well, I wish that instead of building his great mansion house at Hopkinton, Sir Harry had built it at Marblehead. If he had done that, it would probably still be standing, as in Marblehead the people apparently never pull down a stick or a stone."

"You'll have to be contented with the well, and imagine that the little old house across the road is the inn where Agnes was scrubbing the steps when Sir Harry first saw her."

"I wonder if she ever came back here, after she became a titled lady."

"I've never heard about that, but I know that my mother read me the story from the town history once, and it says there that Agnes was very good to her own family, and never neglected the interests of her brothers and sisters."

"I must read the novel myself; the story is certainly a very romantic one. Aren't there some more interesting Marblehead women or girls to tell us about?"



"There are the Floyd Ireson women," said Nora,

"Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,  
Loose of kerchief, and loose of hair,  
With conch-shells blowing, and fish-horns' twang,  
Over and over the Mænads sang,  
"Here 's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,  
Torr'd and futherr'd and corr'd in a corrt  
By the women o' Morble'ead."'

"And after all, poor man, they say now that he didn't do what Whittier thought he had done when he wrote that poem."

"Oh, what was it?" There was considerable eagerness in Brenda's voice.

"Well, they thought that he sailed away from a Marblehead vessel that had sprung aleak in Chaleur Bay. That was the report that was spread in Marblehead, that he had refused to help the sailors who were in danger of drowning. So when he reached Marblehead, the women tarred and feathered him, and rode him around the streets in a cart. That part of the story is true enough, and so it is n't so strange, perhaps, that Whittier should have written a poem about it. But it's a pity, too, for it was afterwards shown that Skipper Ireson himself wanted to go to the help of the wreck, only his sailors wouldn't let him. To save themselves from blame, they told this story about him. But anyway the whole thing was n't quite as bad as it seems in the poem, for the men on the sinking vessel were finally rescued by another vessel that passed their way."



"But it's all true about the women of Marblehead?"

"Oh, yes, they used to be a rather queer lot. Their husbands were off at sea so much that they had to look out for themselves, and this made them very mannish. Their short skirts and queer head-dresses came down to them, I suppose, from their French ancestors, — the first settlers are said to have come from the Island of Jersey, and that's where they got many of their strange words. They say that it's almost impossible to understand some of the old people now. By the way, Floyd Ireson's house is standing," said Amy. "I can show it to you soon. It isn't as old as some of the other houses, but strangers always want to see it. It was in the very early years of this century that Skipper Ireson lived."

During this conversation the girls had been walking very slowly through the old streets, and while Nora was reciting the verses about Agnes Surriage, they had come to a complete stop leaning against the fence in front of an old garden. Only one or two persons passed them while they stood there, and no one seemed surprised at their actions. A white-bearded old man hobbled by, leaning on a cane, and an old woman passed along, wearing a black shawl and a large scoop bonnet, such as one would never see in any place but Marblehead. A dog-cart with two young people, evidently summer residents, clattered through the street; an electric car whirled down Washington Street, toward which they were walking, and these were chief signs of life in that part of the sleepy old town where they found themselves.



"The thing that I should most like to see," said Brenda, "would be the place where we can get a good comfortable luncheon. I'm starved."

"You poor thing!" cried Nora, sympathetically, and Amy hastened to add, —

"We'll take the next car down toward the Fort. We might as well save ourselves any further walking. Your mother said that we might go to one of those little restaurants. Except on a Saturday or a holiday, there's never any crowd in the middle of the day."

"Oh, what fun!" cried Nora. "I was just wondering where we'd find anything to eat. I had an idea that perhaps we were to make a raid on some of these fruit stores."



## XII

### FORT SEWALL AND ST. MICHAEL'S

A FEW minutes in the car brought the girls to the end of the route, and a walk of a minute or two more took them to a region of small unsubstantial-looking buildings, with sign-boards indicating that within light refreshments were provided. One of them was built out on a rock.

"Let us go in here," suggested Julia, "the outlook is pleasant; we might as well make sure of a good view while we are eating."

"It's no wonder I'm hungry," exclaimed Brenda, looking at her watch. "Why it's after two o'clock! I had n't any idea that it was so late."

So to make up for lost time the friends ordered chowder, and ice cream, and pickles, — to be served with the chowder, and not with the ice cream; and Brenda, who still complained of being hungry, finished up with a glass of milk and some doughnuts. This horrified Julia, who thought of the pickles and clams that had preceded this addition to the dessert. But if there were not something ostrich-like in the digestion of average young girls, the amount of suffering in the world would be largely increased through vagaries of diet in which they are constantly indulging; and Brenda, because she had never



suffered especially from combining conflicting substances at the same meal, thought that she was never likely to suffer.

"Now, to the Fort," cried Nora, "if you've eaten enough. I hope that there are some seats there. I'm beginning to feel just a little stiff from climbing up and down those steep streets."

"Well, you've got to climb one more small mountain to get to the Fort, and then you can rest as long as you wish."

"We want time for St. Michael's Church," said Julia.

"Oh, yes, but everything else, even the Burying Hill, we can leave until some other day, if there isn't time to-day for it."

Now the girls had all seen Fort Sewall from the water side, as its old walls and green slopes make it one of the notable objects along the shore of Marblehead Harbor. It is built on a point that commands the entrance to the harbor, and as long ago as 1742 the General Court saw the advantage of fortifying this point, and voted a certain sum of money for the purpose. It was first built to protect the people of Marblehead against French cruisers. But in all our other wars, it has been garrisoned. To-day it is dismantled, its ramparts have become a park, and seats are placed here and there for those who wish to linger on its height to enjoy the view. Almost directly across is the Great Neck, with the lighthouse on the Point, the handsome cottages on the higher land, with the yacht clubs, and still other cottages nearer the water's edge. Then more to the left, and farther out toward sea, Lowell



and Baker's Island, and the distant shores of Beverly, Manchester, and Gloucester. One need not be a great lover of Nature to appreciate all this; and even Brenda, who usually expressed a strong preference for city views over those of seashore or country, drew attention to the blueness of the water, and the changing lights on the island. For the sun, which had so kindly hidden itself while the girls were walking about, had now come out, and shone with such energy that they were glad that they had found so pleasant a resting-place.

Brenda made up for lost time by photographing her three friends, and then, taking the same place in the group that Julia had had, she let her cousin photograph her.

"Come sit down, Brenda, you make me tired, you are so restless," cried Nora, as Brenda moved about uneasily over the heights. "Amy is going to tell us some more interesting things, aren't you?"

It was astonishing how readily Amy's new friends had acquired the habit of addressing her by her first name, and how she almost as readily could call them by theirs.

"Why, if you really want me to," she said in answer to Nora's question, "I might think of something, although I do not know anything that you might not read in some book."

"Oh, that's no matter. It will be like meeting an old friend, if we come upon anything you have told us in print. Isn't there any old witch-house in Marblehead? There ought to be, for it's near enough to Salem."



"I don't know that you'd call it a witch-house, but there is 'the old brig,' as they've named it. It's up opposite the old Burying Hill, one of the oldest houses in town."

"There are so many of them," murmured Nora.

"What makes it a witch's house?"

"Well, I can't say that it deserves the name. Only old Dimond is said to have been the father of Moll Pitcher, who was a famous fortune-teller of Lynn. That's the nearest I can come to a witch. But this old Dimond himself was supposed to have some kind of strange power. People thought that he could warn them of the future, and they used to consult him about all kinds of things. On nights when it was dark and stormy, they say that he used to walk among the graves and beat the air with his arms, reciting strange words to keep disaster from his friends. It is also said that once, when a sum of money had been stolen from an old couple, he revealed the name of the thief, and told where the money could be found."

"So he was n't a bad witch," said Nora.

"Wizard," corrected Brenda.

"Oh, what's in a name?" and Nora waved her hands impatiently.

Just at that moment, a strange unearthly sound—a cross between a whistle and a shout—came to their ears. Amy gave a start, and looked around anxiously.

"It is n't old Dimond," said Julia, smiling.

"Oh, no, it sounds like—" and just then the sound



came again a little louder, and looking around, the girls saw Fritz at some distance leading a bicycle.

"I knew his call," said Amy, "but I did not expect to see him over here."

As Fritz drew near the four girls, he looked rather sheepish. He did not know Amy's friends very well, and he soon came to a sudden halt.

"I'd better go and speak to him," said Amy, "perhaps he has a message."

After a few moments' conversation, she returned to her place on the bench, with Fritz closely following.

"He has a new bicycle," she said, her face beaming with pleasure. "His uncle surprised him with it to-day, and he rode over here to show it to me."

Now Fritz, after acknowledging the greetings of the other girls, whom he had met once or twice, accepted their congratulations for the new bicycle, and displayed its beauties with great earnestness. As he described it, its weight, its finish, its gear, it seemed as if no other bicycle had ever been built that was quite its equal.

When he accepted the invitation given him by Julia to sit down, he flung himself on the grassy slope, in front of a bench against which he stood his wheel, and he kept one hand affectionately on a pedal.

"Come, do tell us some more about Marblehead, something romantic; if there were not more witches here, there were probably pirates?"—Nora looked eagerly at Amy.

"I don't exactly know," she began.



"Oh, Amy, you *do* know something about pirates," and the voice of Fritz had a mischievous ring in it.

"Oh, tell us, that would be something like. Here by the sea is just the place for a tale about pirates."

"There's very little that I can tell," said Amy. "I suppose that he is thinking about Oakum Bay. There is a story about —"

"There, Amy," cried Fritz, "I can see that you are not going to tell them the real thing," and he drew a paper from his pocket which he began slowly to unfold. An expression of annoyance crossed Amy's face, as if she suspected him of some mischief. She leaned forward, as if she would like to take the paper away from him. On second thoughts, she refrained from the attempt.

Fritz held the paper in front of him with a very firm grasp. His left arm was half raised, as if to shield himself from Amy, should she try to take the paper away from him. Then, in a loud voice, he read the following verses.

'T was a Spanish galleon sailed the seas, —  
Long centuries since have rolled, —  
Laden with silver and gems to please  
Gay dames and gallants bold.

But villainous pirates seized the ship,  
As homeward she was bound.  
Ah! she has made her last sea-trip,  
For they ran her soon aground.

From Oakum Bay into Marblehead,  
One lady they brought there.  
But the Captain, alas! and the crew are dead,  
And her they will not spare.



Loud, loud she shrieked, "Save me now from harm!"

"Oh, save my life, oh, save!"

Cruel echo mocked at her wild alarm.

Now she lies in a nameless grave.

Yet once a year when the night has come,

That marked her dreadful death,

You can hear her above the Ocean's boom,

Out-pouring her dying breath.

"How do you like it?" he asked, when he had finished.  
"It's called 'The Shrieking Woman of Marblehead.'"

"Very well indeed," said three of the girls. Amy alone was silent, and the expression of annoyance had not yet passed from her face.

"I like it very much," added Nora, "although it isn't exactly a cheerful story. Is it true?"

"Oh, Amy says so; that's why she wrote the poem, because she had read the story somewhere, and she thought it so tragic. She likes tragic things."

During this speech Amy had been growing redder and redder. For the three girls were looking at her, as if to say, "What a strange girl you are to write poetry!" or "To think that you can write it, how very queer!"

Julia was the first to break the silence. "Did you really write that? How delightful it must be to be able to! I really envy you."

When Julia said anything, people were apt to believe her. Her voice had the ring of sincerity in it, — a quality which its possessor cannot overvalue.

"Why, thank you," responded Amy. "I do not write very much — and I never show what I have written to



people," and she looked fiercely in the direction of Fritz. But the latter did not care. He was getting his revenge for a certain neglect on the part of Amy from which he had suffered since she had become intimate with Brenda and her friends.

He drew another paper from his pocket, and Amy wondered what he would read next. In a flash she had decided that it would not be worth while to try to stop him now. The less she interfered with him, the more quickly would he probably stop his teasing. He was not fond of reading aloud. At least she had seldom been able to persuade him to read to cousin Joan. But, there! he had begun again, and Amy was forced to listen.

Oh, tree! Once proud, though fallen now,  
In sorrow here my head I bow  
To see thee stricken down.  
Well hast thou worn thy grand old age!  
Long hast withstood the tempest's rage,  
The cruel winter's frown.

No storm, no tempest, laid thee low,  
But man, the ruler, was thy foe,  
And with unsparing hand  
He hurled thee prostrate to the earth,  
Regarding not thy royal birth,  
King of the forest land!

"Oh, Fritz, do stop!" cried Amy.

But Fritz was remorseless. "Well, I'll skip a little, but I must give the closing sentiments."

Struck by the smiter death, some day  
Shall all of us, — poor common clay!



Lie low, as thou dost lie.  
And happy he, above whose head  
One fond, regretful tear is shed,  
For whom one soul doth sigh.

"There's resignation for you!" he said, as he finished. But the others, even the voluble Brenda, did not know just what to say. Now, Fritz, after the manner of boys, — and girls, too, for that matter, — having gratified his little desire for getting even with Amy, began to feel ashamed of himself, and although he had several other poems in his pocket, taken, like those he had read, from between the leaves of the book on Amy's desk, he decided to read no more.

When he rose to leave the group, Amy would not respond to his word of good-bye, though he stood before her for a moment, as he raised his hat before finally starting off.

The other girls, feeling that they knew Amy so much less thoroughly than Fritz did, were uncertain what to say.

Amy relieved them of part of their embarrassment by suggesting that they turn back towards the town.

"We may have to wait for the next car, and we want to have time to visit St. Michael's Church."

Julia led the way with Amy, and they walked some distance ahead of the other two. The poetry which Fritz had read had made a great impression on Brenda, not so much because it was poetry, as because Amy had written it.

"She does n't seem like just the same girl to me, does



she to you?" she said to Nora, as they made the descent from the Fort to the road below. "I'm not sure whether I like it or not; it seems strange that she should be able to write like that. Why, those poems sounded good enough to print, didn't they?"

"Why, yes, I'm not sure but they did," replied Nora; "but then, I don't suppose that we are judges."

"I don't see why not. We've always read a lot of poetry, and I'm sure, Nora, that you know ever so many pieces to recite. I've often heard you."

"I suppose that's why Amy has such a stand-off way with her. A person who writes poetry must feel a little different from others."

"Hurry up, girls, I see the car coming, and it may wait only a minute before turning round," cried Amy from below, in a voice that was thoroughly practical and matter-of-fact, — even if its possessor was also a writer of poetry.

The car waited for them a second or two, and the four friends took their places on a front seat. "I think that I've been in St. Michael's Church," said Brenda. "We came over to service once, a year or two ago, but I didn't think particularly about the church. I remember that mamma said something about its being old, but I did not realize then the importance of knowing so much about everything historic," and she made a low bow to Julia and Amy.

"Well, it really is picturesque," returned Amy, "and altogether worth seeing."



"Here we are!" she exclaimed, in a few minutes. Jumping and following her the three other pilgrims were soon walking down a side street toward St. Michael's.

At a house next door Amy obtained the key, and the friends in a moment had the building to themselves. They found the interior a little different from that of any other church they had ever seen; instead of being long and narrow, its cruciform shape was almost that of a square. It had a rather strange-looking ceiling, from which was suspended a fine chandelier, the gift, Amy told them, of a merchant of Bristol, England.

"When it was built, in 1714," said Amy, again referring to her notebook, "the frame and all the materials were brought from England. Of course inside it has been altered and freshened in some ways, but still it gives a good idea of what an old eighteenth-century church was like."

"It's a wonder it never burnt down," said Julia; "it's so near the centre of the town, and I know that there have been many fires in Marblehead."

"It was in great danger in the fire of 1877; but when the roof caught, a young man named Gorman found a foothold on the top of a house near by, and in this way was able to attack the flames, and the rector, Mr. Ward, kept hold of the rope which he had tied around the young man's waist, while he battled with the blaze, and finally put it out before it had done much damage."

"I don't suppose that it was a very popular church during the Revolution," said Nora; "for so many Episcopalians were apt to be Loyalists."



"Well, Rev. Mr. Weeks, the Rector of St. Michael's, did run away to Nova Scotia, and some of the leading members were unpopular Tories. The church itself was closed during the war and for some years after. When the Declaration of Independence was declared, the townspeople rushed in and pulled down the arms of King George from over the chancel, and rang the bell until it cracked."

"How foolish! To treat a church in that way!" said Brenda.

"At any rate, they made themselves understood," responded Julia. The girls now turned from St. Michael's, and while Amy took back the key, they all walked on slowly until she overtook them.

"I wonder where Fritz is," Brenda ventured to ask, as she drew near.

"Oh, he is probably half way home now. He can ride pretty well, and he'll try to see what he or his bicycle can do."

"It's a wonder that he has never had a bicycle before."

"It's a wonder to me that he has one now. His uncle is so afraid that something will happen to him while his father is away, that he never would consent to his having one."

"Perhaps his father has written about it; if Fritz is like any other boys I know, my brothers, for example," said Nora, "he would n't rest content with his uncle's refusal. It may be that his father himself has sent this to him."

"Talking of bicycles," cried Brenda, who had been



walking some steps ahead, "What's the matter with a carriage? There's Thomas, in front of the old Town House, gazing about, and holding in the horses, and wondering if we have been swallowed up in any of these old mansions."

"Well, I'm willing to admit," said Julia, "that I'm not sorry to see him. We've had a perfectly lovely day. But sight-seeing is tiring, and I want to go home and digest all the things I've seen. Then some other day I'd like to come back and visit the old Burying Hill, and all the old birth-places and landmarks that we haven't seen. I suppose there are plenty of them left."

"Oh, yes, plenty, and there are two or three fine pictures in Abbott Hall, that brick building on the hill above the Lee House. We must go there some time."

"But we can't say that we haven't done pretty well to-day, thanks to you, our guide. I feel almost as if I'd been on a pilgrimage to a foreign place," said Julia. "I'm going to work now to read everything that I can lay my hands on about Marblehead."

"I'll tell you what would be pleasant," said Nora, "we might have a kind of a reading party twice a week on the beach, and each one could tell what she had read about Marblehead."

"We might try it," said Brenda. Her voice did not sound very enthusiastic as she continued, "I'm not sure that I should care to do serious reading about anything like that in the summer. But we might try it next Friday. You could come, couldn't you, Amy?"



“Why, yes, I think so, if you don’t meet until eleven o’clock.”

“Oh, we won’t meet before that; I can assure you that we don’t try to get up ahead of the lark. It’s always an accident when I get down to the beach before that.”

“On Friday then,” the girls all cried to Amy, as she left the house, and she responded gayly, —

“On Friday.”



### XIII

#### GYPSIES AND AN ACCIDENT

A DAY or two after the journey to Marblehead Brenda one afternoon started off on her bicycle.

"Don't go very far, Brenda," said her mother. "It's rather warm, and I don't like to have you start off alone so late in the day."

"Oh, Nora's coming, too," and Nora wheeled into sight as she spoke, "and we're only going a little beyond the cross-roads. We'll not be gone an hour."

"Very well," replied Mrs. Barlow, "I don't want Nora to run the risk of getting overheated, or anything of that kind while she is here visiting."

Now Nora and Brenda, as they started off on their bicycles, seemed to be in high spirits. It was easy to read this in their faces, and had any one met them before they turned into the main road, they might have been heard singing a lively duet. Perhaps, however, if any one had met them, the girls would have stopped their singing. Yet I think that the echo would have reached the ears of even an absent-minded fellow-traveller.

"Do you think that we really ought to do it?" asked Nora, when they had gone half a mile.

"Why not? There's no real harm in it. It isn't one of the things we've ever been forbidden to do."



"Of course not, because no one would ever think of our wanting to do such a thing. I noticed that you did not divulge your plans to Julia, and you didn't say a word to your mother."

"Neither did you."

"Well, Brenda Barlow, you *are* unfair. I could n't say a word, because you made me promise not to. But honestly I felt just like talking to Julia about it. She always gives such good advice."

"Oh, well, if you feel so particular, you'd better not come with me. I do hate such squeamish people."

"Oh, I wouldn't turn back on any account. If anything is going to happen to you, it might as well happen to me, too. 'United we stand, divided we fall;' so let's not really quarrel until this expedition is over—unless you will give it up now."

"No, I can't now. I'm devoured with curiosity about those people. Their tents are close to the road, so that I don't think that there is the least danger."

"Well, I hope not."

"There's one reason why I wish that we were not going. The day is so warm. I wish that it were a little cooler. It's strange how heated one grows on a bicycle. We're not riding so very fast."

The expedition on which the two friends had started was one of which Mrs. Barlow would have disapproved very strongly. Indeed, had she known that they intended to visit a gypsy encampment she would have forbidden their going. But Brenda, during the early part of the week, had



noticed, when driving, beyond the cross-roads, two small tents and two or three vehicles drawn up beside them. There were horses tethered near, and some strange-looking men and women sitting on the grass in front of the tents.

Brenda's curiosity was stirred by what she had seen, and a glimpse of a young girl in a scarlet dress, with bare feet and long, dark hair hanging down her back, completed the work. She felt that she must know more about the gypsies, for the answers which her father gave to her questions only increased her curiosity. To think that there were people who passed all the year in this roving fashion! Who had no homes of their own! For, of course, you can hardly call a tent and a cart a home. Brenda made up her mind that she must know more about these people, and, as she rather feared a refusal if she should ask permission, she decided to interest Nora in her scheme of visiting.

The little that Mr. Barlow had been able to tell Brenda about the gypsies had only increased her interest. "They come every summer," he had said, "and, in my opinion, they are very good people to keep away from."

"But where are they in the winter, papa; do they live in tents?"

"I'm sure I hope not, unless they go to some warmer climate than ours."

"I wonder why nobody knows more about gypsies! I don't suppose it would be so very hard to find out."

"Perhaps not, if any one thought it worth while to try. But I rather imagine that the gypsies themselves prefer to



be let alone. They can carry on their horse-trading and their fortune-telling better if they keep themselves to themselves."

Fortune-telling! Brenda reflected for a moment. She remembered that a year or two before, one summer afternoon, the cook and the housemaid had seemed much excited by the appearance of an old gypsy woman with a basket on her arm. They had welcomed her as if expecting her, and Brenda had seen her seated in a corner of the laundry when, a little later, she followed the gypsy to see what was happening. But although on her entrance the girls and the gypsy seemed to be merely engaged in bargaining about the baskets, Brenda knew that the whispering and laughing meant something more. Mary, the cook, after the gypsy's departure, would grant her no more satisfaction than to say that they had been having their fortunes told, and that in consequence she expected a pot of money soon, and a trip to the old country.

Her interest had not been lessened by the fact that she had not heard of Mary's receiving any large sum of money. It is true, that she had taken a trip to the old country, permission for which Mrs. Barlow had given rather grudgingly. It is also true that at the end of her vacation she had announced that she was engaged to a fine lad who was coming out to be married in a year or two. But as he had not yet appeared, Brenda did not know whether or not Mary had still kept her faith in the power of the fortune-teller.

Of one thing, however, Brenda was certain, and that was that if ever she had the chance she would have her fortune



told — and here was the very chance, she thought, as she saw the gypsy camp.

“I am very glad that you are here, Nora,” she had said to her friend, “for I should n’t exactly care to go alone, and Julia would be sure to disapprove, if I should ask her to go; and even Amy probably would n’t like to go on an adventure. She always has that kind of a stand-off air, as if she wouldn’t for the world do anything out of the ordinary.”

But now that they had really embarked on the adventure, both Nora and Brenda felt some qualms, and by singing, and indulging in more or less badinage, they were doing what is generally called, “Whistling to keep their courage up.”

As they drew near the encampment, they dismounted from their wheels, and approached the tents on foot. A little yellow dog ran out and barked at them, and a large Newfoundland rose from the grass where he had been lying, shook himself, and stared at them. The little dog, finding that he made no impression on the girls, turned from them to chase two or three hens that were standing under one of the carts. Hearing the noise, and realizing that something unusual was going on, an old woman pushed aside the curtains of the tent, and looked at them. Then she turned, and evidently spoke to some one inside, for almost immediately a young girl stepped out with a half-dozen baskets on her arm. She was the same girl whom Brenda had noticed when she drove past with her father. Her feet were bare, her scarlet calico skirt reached half-



way to her ankles, she wore no collar, and the button at the neck was hanging by a thread, and her long dark hair, was tied so loosely as to look like an unkempt mane. As she drew near, she held the baskets toward them.

"Only a quarter for any of them," she said, "only a quarter."

Brenda drew out her little purse, "I'll take one," she said, picking out a small one which she immediately hung on her arm. The stout old woman at the opening of the tent continued to smile at them. Then she beckoned to the girl.

"I wish we had asked her if we could see the inside of the tent, that is what I really want," said Brenda.

Just then the old woman came forward.

"The young lady has a pretty hand," she said, pointing to Brenda's right hand, from which she had removed her glove. Brenda received the compliment a little awkwardly. She did not know just what to say.

"A little silver, ladies," said the old gypsy, "and your fortunes —"

"There," said Brenda, "that's what we'd like, our fortunes told."

"This way, then," said the old woman, smiling with satisfaction, and she led them toward the largest of the two wagons standing there. Going ahead, she mounted the steps, and the girls were on the point of following, when they thought of their bicycles.

"Perfectly safe to leave them right there. Nobody touch them," said the old woman; but Nora felt that it



was wise to watch the wheels, and so she signalled to Brenda that she would stay with them.

Once inside the large van, Brenda was so much entertained by what she saw, that she almost forgot to have her fortune told. Although it was only about four or five feet wide, it was arranged as a living-room. There was a long, broad seat — bunk perhaps it should be called — running across the end. Blankets, pillows, and high-colored coverlid were arranged on it, showing that it was used at times for a bed. Little doors under the bunk indicated a closet; "probably for clothes," thought Brenda.

Around the sides of the wagon was a long seat, and the space under it was stuffed with all kinds of odds and ends. The old woman raised the blind from one of the windows at the side, and motioned Brenda to sit down. In the mean time, Nora, left outside, was looking about her to take in all the features of the gypsy camp. First of all, she saw that the large van which Brenda had entered was gayly painted, with gilded letters, which she decided to be the initials of the owner, on the sides. There was a baggage rack behind on which she supposed they must carry their trunks when they travelled. One shabby old trunk, and a wooden chest were on the ground beside the tent. The tents themselves were rather dingy and grimy-looking, and a hole had been cut in one for a stove-pipe, from which a column of smoke was issuing. There was another wagon near-by and an exceedingly good-looking buggy. At some distance, where two horses were tethered



by a long rope to a fence, Nora noticed a tall youth lying on the grass.

"It's your turn now, Nora," cried Brenda, coming to the door of the van, and beckoning to her friend. Nora shook her head. She had no desire to have her fortune told.

"It's getting late, and we ought to be turning home."

"Nonsense!" cried Brenda, coming close to her, "you must go in; the gypsy expects it."

"But I didn't come out to-day just to please gypsies," responded Nora. "I came to please you, because you wanted to have your fortune told. I'm not going to waste my money in that way, I can assure you."

"Oh, that's all right; I've paid for you. You're my guest," said Brenda, pushing Nora in the direction of the van.

"Was it really worth while?" she asked, as she stood half undecided what to do.

"Well, that's one reason I want you to go. I'm anxious to hear what you think of her. She really told me a fine fortune."

"Do you think it can come true?"

"Oh, I don't see why not. Some things that she said were very interesting. Part of it can't come true for ten years, and in ten years almost anything might happen. But do hurry, Nora, you are keeping her waiting."

Nora's stay in the van was shorter than that of Brenda's, and she came out looking very much amused. "The most of *my* fortune is not to happen for twenty years, and I don't see how in the world I am ever to wait. She said



one thing, however, that may come true. She said that within six months, I was likely to have a handsome present from a tall, sandy-haired man.

"As I calculate that will bring me near Christmas, and as the description fits papa, I shall hope that I am to have the ring that he has promised me. So you see that fortune-tellers are not all frauds."

"Hush," whispered Brenda, "or she'll hear you."

The gypsy was now standing close to them. "I could come to the young ladies' house some time," she said, "and if they have any dresses they can't wear any more, I should be glad to buy them, — and I could tell more fortunes; there is more to be told, much more," she added.

"No, thank you," said Nora; "I don't care to know any more about the future, and I haven't any clothes to sell. Come, Brenda."

But Brenda still lingered.

"Could we see the inside of the tent? Have you a gypsy kettle there?"

"No, no," said the old woman, "no kettle, a cook-stove like other peoples. You can come." She spoke in a rather ungracious tone, and then turning to the young girl gave some kind of a command in a strange language, — "gibberish" Brenda called it, and indeed it was little better. But the girl understood, and, hastening to the tent, evidently told its occupant that they were coming. For soon a tall, thin woman stood in the opening, raising her hand as if in welcome, and the fortune-teller told the two girls to follow her to the tent.



A glance inside was enough for the girls. There was nothing particularly romantic or entertaining to be seen, and there was a decidedly disagreeable odor in the air. For on the little cook-stove there was a pan of onions and fish frying, and the ventilation of the place was not such as to make it, even when nothing was cooking, agreeable to linger in. As to the furnishing, there was little unusual. A fur rug, such as was spread at the entrance to the tent, would probably not be found in most kitchens; nor a cot-bed piled high with blankets and pillows. But the long wooden unpainted dining-table, with an assortment of heavy crockery, and a few tin plates, was similar to dining-tables that Nora has seen in one or two North End houses that she had visited. There was a little child of two asleep on a cushion near the stove, and Nora thought that he must find the room very uncomfortable; but the mother only shook her head when Nora expressed herself, adding, "He likes it hot." This woman not only spoke good English, but she seemed more willing than the fortune-teller to tell the girls about the life and habits of their tribe.

She explained that they had come from New Jersey, where they usually spent the winter, that they never lived in houses when they could help it, and that the large van had cost Henry, the head of the tribe, more than three hundred dollars. Three women besides herself and the fortune-teller were part of this tribe, and there were two other children besides the young girl and the baby whom the girls had seen.



"The other women are out selling baskets, and the children are with them, I suppose. But the men, oh, they go down to Lynn on the train, or anywhere, where they think they can buy or sell a horse. That's their trade, horse-selling."

"Oh," Nora was now becoming interested, and inclined to ask questions. The old woman had seated herself on the ground, although there were several chairs in the tent, and Brenda leaned against a packing-case, the inside of which had been fitted up like a dresser, with some rough shelves to hold odds and ends of dishes and food.

"Come, Nora," cried Brenda, "I thought that you were in a hurry."

"Why, yes, I am," and Nora left the tent reluctantly, for she was just beginning to get the information that she wanted about gypsy modes of living.

"Are n't they picturesque?" said Brenda, looking back, as they mounted their wheels, to the little encampment, with the two women and the girl standing in front of the kitchen tent, with the large van in the background, and the tethered horses and the chickens adding another element of life to the scene.

"We're not going to get home any too soon," said Nora; "it seems to me that those clouds mean rain. We must go as fast as we can."

"Yes, we must," responded Brenda, putting all the speed that she could into her wheel, regardless of the fact that they were at a turn of the road, and near the top of an incline.



"Be careful, be careful," cried Nora, whose speed had increased but little. "There's a slope ahead!"

But it was too late for Brenda to do anything. To apply her brake just then, would have meant to overturn herself, probably. The coast ahead seemed clear, and as she had a pretty cool head in an emergency, she felt that she could get to the bottom safely. But, unluckily, at the bottom of the road was a stone wall on which she had not reckoned, and she found herself suddenly going so fast that she saw that she could not avoid it in time to turn into the narrow foot-path, as she had intended. Nora gave a scream, for she had now jumped off her own wheel, and Brenda, seeing certain disaster for herself at the bottom of the hill applied her brake. It did not work, and she felt that the only way to prevent her being dashed against the stone wall, was to jump, and at the rate she was going that might mean something pretty serious for her. Suddenly a figure seemed to rise from the side of the road, and in some mysterious way, the man — for it was a man — stopped the bicycle, caught Brenda as she fell from it, all within a few feet of the stone wall.

The descent of the hill, the stopping of the wheel, had all taken much less time than has been occupied in telling it, but the minutes, or minute, whichever it was, had worn greatly on Brenda's nerves, and she found herself on the point of crying.

"There would have been a bad smash," said the man, "if you'd gone to the bottom."



"Oh, Brenda!" cried Nora, who had now come up to her, "how you frightened me! I thought surely you'd break your ankle, if nothing worse. How do you feel?"

"Oh, I'm all right," said Brenda, shaking out her skirts. "If my brake had worked I—"

Then she stopped in the middle of her sentence. For the first time she had a chance to see the face of the man who had prevented the accident.

"I can't tell you how much obliged I am," she continued, still looking at him with much curiosity.

"You ought to take his name and address," whispered Nora, "so that your father could reward him in some way. It's really like saving your life. You might have had a dreadful time if you'd struck against that stone wall."

In the pocket of her skirt Brenda found a little notebook, and, detaching a leaf, she wrote her father's name and address on it.

"Oh, no, Miss, no reward at all, nothing like it," the man spoke English, although with an accent; "but if Miss would give me one of those pictures, the one with my little boy in it. He die last week, and we have no picture of him."

The man looked very sad indeed as he spoke.

"There," said Brenda, "that's where I saw you, on the Fourth; you remember," turning to Nora, "that I took some pictures of a man with his boy. I have been wondering where I had seen him. Now it all comes back to me."



"Why, how strange!" said Nora, "I remember him, too. Of course you'll send him the pictures."

"Now I'll take *your* name and address."

The man seemed to hesitate. "It's only so that I can send the pictures," explained Brenda. "I will try to send them as soon as they are printed."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," replied the man. "We live on Derby Street in Salem, down near the water. My wife and the baby is there all the time; but I go peddling."

The man was good-looking, and strong-appearing, and in some way peddling seemed an incongruous occupation for him. Or, as Nora put it, after they had wheeled away from him, "Peddling seems lazy work for a strong, decent-looking man like that."

"He certainly is strong," responded Brenda. "If it had n't been for him, I should probably have a broken ankle and a broken wheel at this very minute. I must tell papa all about him. Perhaps he can get something better for him to do."

"Shall you tell him about the fortune-tellers, too?" asked Nora, mischievously.

"I cannot see that that is necessary," said Brenda, crossly.



## XIV

### A FALLING OUT

AMY was much more annoyed with Fritz than the girls had realized that day at Marblehead. She had not imagined that a friend could be so unfriendly. For she knew that Fritz was well aware that her verse-writing was one of her cherished secrets. She had hardly ever read any of her own poems to her mother, and it was only by chance that Fritz had learned that she was in the habit of writing verse. It was indeed wholly by chance that he had discovered her secret. When they were down on the rocks, one shady afternoon, while Fritz was busy reading the "Life of Washington," Amy scribbled so eagerly, and wrinkled her eyebrows so fiercely, as she nibbled at her pencil, that Fritz could not resist asking, —

"What in the world is it, Amy? You look as if you were trying to solve the hardest kind of a riddle."

"Well, it's harder than a riddle; it's a rhyme. I'm trying to make two ideas rhyme — that is, two lines, and they won't."

Fritz almost let his book fall into the little pool of water beside the rock on which he was sitting.

"Why, Amy, is that what you are writing — rhymes, verses; not poetry is it?"



Amy could not help laughing at his expression of amazement.

"Well, the person who reads it will have to decide whether it is poetry. I shouldn't like to say myself. But I'm trying to tell a story in verse, and some way it does n't come out right."

"Let me hear it," said Fritz, "and I'll tell you what the matter is." His tone was one of extreme confidence, and, of course, having let the cat out of the bag, as she had never meant to do, there was nothing now for Amy but to give Fritz the chance to hear what she had written.

The story was a romantic one about a young man who had walked in a garden with a girl he admired, for whom he had gathered a rose which she accepted warmly. Then came the catastrophe, —

The cloud of war o'er the country broke,  
When the call to arms was given,  
The lover went, to the maid he spoke,  
"We shall meet, dearest love, in Heaven."

"He was mighty sure he'd be killed, was n't he?" said Fritz. "But go on," for Amy began to close her blank book.

So Amy read the stanza in which the young soldier's death was described, and then she came to the climax, which, in her secret heart, she considered very fine.

Ere long she died; in her hand they found  
A rose all withered and sere,  
They buried it with her in the ground,  
For they said, "She has held it dear."



But, instead of applauding, Fritz only laughed vociferously.

Amy naturally looked indignant. "I must say that I can't see anything to laugh at."

"Why, no, it's very sad. That's one reason I'm laughing; it just struck me as odd that they should die off so; and how did the rose get into her hand when she was dead. You have n't explained that."

"Oh, you are n't a bit poetical," and Amy read the last stanza aloud again.

"Isn't the metre just a little lively for such a sad subject?" On account of the drill that he had had in Latin and Greek, Fritz knew something about metres, even though he had n't the widest appreciation of English poetry. Amy seemed disturbed by this suggestion, and, going over the lines again, she decided that Fritz was partly right, and that some time in the future she would cast the poem into some other form.

"In spite of your laughing at me, Fritz, I can see it's a good thing to have some one to criticise me, and after this I'll show you some of the pieces that I write. But you must promise not to speak to another soul about them."

"Why, does n't your mother know that you write?"

"Oh, yes, of course. But she does n't care to have me spend so much time over poetry. She says that it's better to read good things now, and write when I'm older. But some way I can't help writing whenever I have the chance."

In the two years that had passed since Fritz had first learned of her poetic proclivities, Amy had had no reason



to think that he had ever broken his promise, and many a pleasant afternoon had they spent together, Amy busy with her pencil and writing pad, and Fritz ready to drop his book at a suggestion from Amy, to listen to her latest effort. It might be hard to say just how valuable these criticisms were, and just as hard, perhaps, to say whether the verses were worth the time that Amy put on them. Yet in certain ways this was her chief recreation, and it was undoubtedly a better way of spending the time than in mere idle reading, or in games.

It is only fair to say, too, that as time went on the poems written by Amy improved decidedly. Instead of sentimental subjects drawn from her own imagination, she now looked for subjects in history, or in tradition, such as "The Shrieking Woman of Marblehead." As this was one of the most recent, as well as the most carefully written of her poems, she need not have been so angry with Fritz for reading it. Her mother had approved of it, as well as of the other poem which he had read. There was this to be thankful for, and Amy appreciated it, as she thought of the events of that day at Marblehead.

"But it was very mean of Fritz, all the same," thought Amy, "he broke his promise. That is to say, he broke the spirit, if not the letter of it, for he knew perfectly well that I don't want any one else to know that I try to write poetry. The one thing in the world that I hate is to be laughed at, and they always laugh at girls who write poetry."



Although Amy may have had in mind the vague, unsympathetic world in general, when she said "they," I think that she more particularly meant Brenda, whom she knew to be a person unlikely to approve of a scribbling girl. Now although Amy prided herself on her independence, and although she would not have gone out of her way to gain any one's favor, she found herself unexpectedly anxious to stand well with Brenda. She was strongly drawn to Brenda, perhaps because the latter was so unlike any one else she had ever known. Brenda seemed so free from care, so bird-like almost, in her way of flitting from one enjoyment to another, that, without envying her, Amy often wished that she could get herself to take life more as Brenda did.

"But then how can I?" she would say, a little sadly. "Brenda can do anything that she wishes at the minute she wishes to do it. No one ever interferes with her."

Conscience here asserted itself, and Amy continued, "Of course no one ever interferes with me. I know that mamma has always tried to let me have everything that we can afford. But then that is just it, — what we can afford. Sometimes we are able to afford so little. There's hardly a girl along the shore who has n't a wheel; why, even the daughters of the mechanics at the Mills have them! Then there's cousin Joan, she is a great trial to me. I don't suppose mother realizes it. But I get very tired reading to her, and carrying her meals upstairs, and —" when Amy reached this pitch in her reflections, she was almost ready to cry or to write a poem. A poem



was always consoling to her, because in her search for words to rhyme, or to perfect the metre, she usually forgot her grievances, even though the particular subject of the poem might be something far from cheerful.

To-day, however, she was not to have an opportunity either to repine any longer, or to write a poem. "Amy," said her mother, coming into the room, "I wish that you would come up to the studio to sit for me. I am making a small color sketch, and you are just the model I need."

So Amy, seated on the little three-cornered stool on which her mother placed her, with her hair falling over her shoulders, and her sleeves rolled up to the elbow, made a docile model, and showed no signs of weariness, even when she had been there for some time.

"Amy," said her mother, for neither model nor artist was obliged to keep silent. "Amy, isn't it two or three days since Fritz has been here?"

"Yes, I think that it is," responded Amy.

"He hasn't been here since the day you went to Marblehead."

"No, 'm, he hasn't been. You know we saw him at Marblehead, over there by the Fort. He was on his new wheel."

"Perhaps the new bicycle accounts for his not having been here. I suppose that he's very busy using it."

"Oh, it would be all the easier for him to come over; why, he'd be here in a second, almost," said Amy.



Mrs. Redmond looked at Amy rather closely. Without knowing the exact state of the case, she suspected that there had been some falling out between the two friends.

"You must be careful, Amy," she said gently, "not to let your new friends come too readily between you and Fritz. It is natural that you should get more pleasure out of the society of girls, and for my own part I am very glad that you have these new friends. But at the same time Fritz has always depended greatly upon you in the summer, and you must not let him feel that he is in the way."

"Oh, I am sure that I do not."

"Well, I should judge by the way he spoke that day when he came for you, and found that you had gone to Marblehead — that he felt that you had let the others 'cut him out.' Isn't that the expression?" and Mrs. Redmond smiled at Amy.

"Well, I think that it's funny that a boy should feel jealous of girls," said Amy, "for that is what it amounts to."

"If you and Fritz are really friends, as I think you are," continued Mrs. Redmond, "you will not let a thing of this kind develop into a real coldness."

"What thing, mamma?" asked Amy; she had not told her mother how Fritz had acted at Fort Sewall, and she wondered if she had heard about it in any other way.

"Oh, I mean the little feeling that you both may have.



Fritz thinks that you are forgetful of him, and you seem annoyed with him about something."

Here Amy had her chance to tell her mother how matters stood; but for some reason she still felt unwilling to describe the fashion in which Fritz had betrayed her confidence. Perhaps if she had done so, Mrs. Redmond might have laughed at her a little for taking a trifling thing so much to heart. Moreover (and other girls who have fallen out with their friends will agree that they have often found themselves in the same position) Amy herself began to feel that she was making too much of a trifle. At least she could not honestly say that she thought that Fritz had done her much harm. For she had seen Nora and Julia and Brenda twice since the day at Marblehead, and they had seemed no less cordial than before they had heard her verses. So Amy was driven to justify herself by saying that it was the principle that she objected to,—that Fritz should have taken such a childish way to tease her. When she met Fritz on his bicycle not far from her own gate, she merely bowed and said "good afternoon," and neither asked him to come in with her, nor made any pleasant little comment about his wheel. Fritz might have forgiven the neglect in not asking him to come in. But not to say a word about his bicycle! When she knew that for two years it had been the dearest wish of his heart to own one! Really, this was too much. So, after dismounting to greet her, hoping for a little bicycle conversation, Fritz jumped on his wheel again, and, with a proud little nod,



as he touched his cap, he was off at a rapid pace. As her mother talked, therefore, Amy knew that the trouble with Fritz had already begun, and yet she was not willing to lift her hand to change the state of affairs.

As she painted, Mrs. Redmond studied her daughter's face, and if she didn't read exactly what was passing in her mind, she guessed the state of affairs pretty closely.

She knew that she had said all that was necessary, and that if Amy refused to be guided by her, she must take the consequences. She knew, too, that Amy was by no means an obstinate girl, and that she was more inclined than many of her age to be guided. There was only one difficulty,— if Amy once made up her mind definitely on a given subject, there was small likelihood of her changing. The only possible way to move her, was to approach her before she had reached the place where she considered that her mind was made up.

“There's the bell; run Amy and see what cousin Joan wants,” said Mrs. Redmond. She had said all that she intended to say at this time, and she was willing to wait and let the seed germinate.

Amy found cousin Joan restless and impatient. The little Murphy girl, who came in in the morning to do the rougher work in Mrs. Redmond's little kitchen, and dust cousin Joan's room, had gone home.

“She forgot to leave me a glass of water, and she didn't pull down the blind at the east window, so that my eyes just ache with all that light, and I do wish I had some one to read to me. I declare, Amy, I hope if you



live to be old and sick, you won't know what it is to be neglected. Where's Fritz now? I haven't seen him here since the day you went to Marblehead."

"He has n't been here since then," replied Amy, as she pulled down the blind, straightened the pillows, and took a pitcher from the table to replenish with cold water.

"Well, it was always pleasant to have him running in and out," said cousin Joan. "I never did think much of a house without a boy in it. He read to me that day you were at Marblehead, and I enjoyed it very much. It is n't often that I have the chance to hear good reading."

Amy did not say anything. Yet it was hard for her not to make a reply. Cousin Joan spoke as if it was a great rarity for her to have any one read to her. But Amy felt as if she herself had spent almost weeks of her life reading to the old lady, and it was n't altogether agreeable to find that her efforts had not been really appreciated.

Cousin Joan, pleased to have some one to talk to, for she had been alone all the morning, continued in a rather complaining tone, —

"I suppose it's all come from your getting so intimate with those summer people. But no good will come from that. Their life is very different from yours, and you'll find it out soon enough. You'll have nothing left to show for it all but a lot of discontent."

"I've never been perfectly and absolutely contented,"



said Amy. "I don't think that mamma wishes me to be. She says that people would never make any progress in the world if they were perfectly contented."

"Well, I don't believe that you are going to make much progress in the world just by being intimate with Brenda Barlow, and those other girls. When they go back to the city, they'll forget you, just as sure as fate, see if they don't."

Amy wisely made no reply. She knew that it was not worth while to argue with cousin Joan. The old lady had her own way of looking at things, and Amy had been brought up to treat the opinions of her elders with respect, even when she could not agree with them perfectly.

"Do not pretend to agree with a person, if you find that your opinion is absolutely unchanged. But do not argue with an older person. You may be right, but you are even more apt to be wrong, and it is much more important to show a proper respect for the opinions of older persons." This was one of Mrs. Redmond's rules.

"Can't I read to you for a little while?" she said gently. "I see that your church paper has n't been opened, and I'd be very happy to read that for a little while."

This offer cost Amy something, for, of all the things that she was in the habit of reading to cousin Joan, the church paper was the one that wearied her the most.

As she began to unfold it, she looked out of the window. She was sorry a moment afterwards that she had done so, for there, on his bicycle, accompanied by another boy,



also on a bicycle, was Fritz, riding past the house as gayly as if he and Amy had n't had a falling out.

"Why, he did n't even look up at the window," thought Amy, as she turned to her paper.

"When I was your age, I never sighed like that," said cousin Joan, as Amy sat down beside her.



## XV

### THE READING CLASS

BRENDA'S Fourth of July photographs turned out much better than many others that she had taken under equally favorable circumstances. On one of the afternoons when she sat with the other girls on the rocks, she displayed with considerable pride the prints that had been sent her from town. "I consider it the most fortunate thing in the world," she said, "that I should have these prints to give to that delightful, interesting foreigner. I can't tell what he is; but he must be an Italian with those big black eyes."

"Or a Portuguese," suggested Nora.

But Brenda did not take this suggestion kindly. The only foreign family with which she had ever had much to do was the Rosa family, and as the Rosas were Portuguese, she wanted novelty in this new acquaintance, and so she preferred to consider him Italian.

"I'm going to send them to him right away," she said, as the others admired the prints of the pictures she had taken at Tucker's wharf.

"How will you send them?" asked Julia.

"Why, by mail, I suppose; unless we go over to Salem soon."



"Why, Brenda!" cried Nora, after a moment, as she looked at the pictures one by one. "Do you realize that you have n't that man's name, nor his address, even?"

"Why, yes, I have, — Derby Street."

"But Derby Street may be two miles long. Anyway, you cannot send them by mail. You certainly do not know his name. He didn't give it to you after all."

Brenda looked crestfallen at this reminder. She had been picturing to herself the joy of the man when he should open the large envelope which she intended sending with the photographs of himself and the little boy. But naturally she must give up that plan, as she did not know where to send them.

"Oh, well, we'll go over to Salem and call on him."

"Shall you knock at every door in Derby Street, and say, 'I wish to find the man whose photograph I took on the Fourth of July'?"

"Or, you might show the photograph to the Chief of Police; he may be able to identify him."

"Oh, Nora, he didn't look like a man that the police would know anything about. He seemed so sad; why, there was a tear in his eye when he spoke about his little boy."

"Oh, of course I did n't mean that he was bad, when I spoke about the police, only that's one of the ways to try to find lost people — to go to the police about them."

"Perhaps he'll come over here," said Brenda; "you know that I gave him papa's address. I think that he ought to have some kind of a reward."



Now Brenda had tried, without much success, on her return from that bicycle trip, to make her father realize that she had been in great danger. For some reason or other, he had not seemed to her sufficiently sympathetic, although Nora had confirmed her story.

"I dare say that you were in more or less danger, and I hope that this will be a lesson to you. No one can afford to take risks when on a wheel in an unfamiliar locality. You say yourself that you had never been down that hill before. Then I can only say that you were almost criminally careless in starting to ride down it."

"But I didn't know that it was so steep."

"That is the very thing that I should like to impress on you. 'Didn't know' is probably responsible for more accidents than any other single phrase used by careless young persons like yourself. Your mother and I have given you considerable liberty in the matter of bicycling, because we have always thought that you had sufficient common sense to avoid such risks as you have just described. There is n't likely to be a courageous foreigner waiting to rescue you on every road, and so perhaps we shall have to forbid your riding about the country unless accompanied by an older person."

"Oh, papa!"

"Remember, that if such a rule is made, it will be your own fault."

Although Mr. Barlow had spoken thus severely to Brenda, he was not really unappreciative of what the foreigner had done. He told Mrs. Barlow that he should



be glad to know more about the man, and that if she learned his name, he would look him up and do something for him.

But the fact remained, as Nora had reminded Brenda, that the man had not given his name to the girls, and his address was so vaguely stated, that there was very little chance of their finding him. But on this bright afternoon, as the friends sat by the sea, Brenda, who never looked wholly on the dark side of things, decided that there was every chance that the man would call at her house. "He certainly had my name and address, and he seemed very anxious to have one of the photographs."

"They are very good," said Julia, "and I am surprised that your camera could make such a good portrait as that of the man and his child. Any one who knew them would recognize them in a minute, and that's more than can be said of most amateur portraits. Not yours, of course, Brenda," she concluded, for she knew that her cousin was a little sensitive on the subject of her work in photography.

The reading class was progressing, for the girls had really followed the chance suggestion made that day at Marblehead, and had begun a course of regular reading. They met regularly twice a week, and in fact there had been hardly a day since their pilgrimage on which they had not been able to find an hour or two which could be given to reading, either on Brenda's piazza, or in the shadow of the rocks. Their first book had been "Mosses from an Old Manse," which, strangely enough, not one of them had read before. After this had come Theodore Winthrop's "John



Brent," which contained enough romance to satisfy even the exacting Brenda. One afternoon Amy had read some of her favorite passages from "The Faery Queen." But it is no breach of confidence, perhaps, to say that Brenda felt just a little bored, and not altogether pleased with the musical lines. "I can't pretend that I am able to appreciate all this poetry. It must be fine, or sensible people like you would n't think so. Sometime I'm going to cultivate a taste for it, I really am; so don't look as if I were the most imbecile person in the world. Many people don't like poetry any better than I do," she concluded. "But 'Cranford,'—I've begun 'Cranford' and I think that it is just too funny for anything. I never read anything half so funny. I wish that we could have something else like that."

Now in so short a time the four friends could not have read so many books, had they tried to do all their work in the hours of their meeting. So they established their reading club on a rather novel plan. On the recommendation of Mrs. Barlow and Mrs. Redmond, they were making out a list of entertaining and wholesome books with which it was desirable that they should be acquainted. Each girl was to report once a week that she had read two of these books, and at each of their meetings, each girl in turn was to have the privilege of choosing the book from which she wished to have a chapter or two read.

Now, even girls who are not book-worms will read in the summer. What else is there to do in the long hours of the middle of the day, when it is too hot to wheel or walk, or



even to bathe? With a good book in her hand, a reader forgets to grumble about the weather, and two books a week is a small allowance for the average bright girl. The plan of the reading class pleased Brenda when she found that fiction was to have so large a place in the programme; and so, starting without any prejudice against the plan, she soon found herself enjoying the books that the others were reading. Moreover, one day when she took down one of her "Countess" novels to re-peruse it, she was surprised to find it seem rather flat and trivial. At first she could not understand this change of view, but, on talking it over with Nora, the latter said heartily, "Why, of course, that's the very thing that would happen after you had begun to read standard books. You may not realize that you are doing it, but all the time you are comparing the other books you read with those of the great authors. There," as if she had made a discovery, "I suppose that that is why they are called 'standard.' They are used to measure other books by."

"Well, I'm not sure," said Brenda, "that I really compared 'Mollie's Eyes' with 'John Brent.' Of course they're not a bit alike, and still, when I was looking over 'Mollie's Eyes' yesterday, I could not help thinking that it was very silly, and not a bit like life, and it did not even seem as exciting as it used to."

Nora gave Brenda's hand a gentle squeeze. "I've been going through something like that myself," she said; "I had a novel in my bag that I bought on the news-stand coming down here, and do you know I positively could



not read the last two chapters, when I tried to yesterday. I found that I didn't care whether they died or got married, or, indeed, what happened to them."

"If we don't take care," said Brenda, "we'll be models, like Julia and Amy, in our reading. I don't suppose that either one of them has ever read a book that she oughtn't to in her life."

"We're not exactly in the same class with them now," responded Nora; "but we might try to do all we can now, to make up for 'wasted opportunities,' as they say in sermons."

Although the girls might jest a little about their taste in reading, it was certainly true that the row of paper novels disappeared from the shelves in Brenda's room. They were sent upstairs to a large unused room where the magazines and other summer literature found a resting place, until Mrs. Barlow had time to sort it all over to send to various institutions where reading-matter was desired. She smiled when she found the half-dozen "Countess" books there, and she put them in the pile that was intended for kindling.

"I do not really suppose," she said to herself, "that they would do great harm to any one, if packed in one of my hospital boxes, and yet, on the whole, they would do so little good, that I shall be glad to tell Brenda that when I saw them, I availed myself of the opportunity to burn them. She ought never to have owned them; but when I found that she had read them, I was perfectly willing to wait a little until she herself gave them up.



I knew she would see how silly they were. Thanks to Julia and Amy, the time has come a little sooner even than I hoped, and the burial of 'The Countess' will be observed without any tears on Brenda's part."

It would be far from the truth to say that Brenda never again cared to read a trashy novel, or that her taste for the best reading was completely established by the reading club. But it is true that she never again read one of these trivial books with great pleasure, and she never went out of her way to get one of them. Moreover, she had begun to see the value of the better books that are real literature, and with her eyes opened in this way, it was plain enough that in the future she would be able to use her powers of discrimination. She was surprised herself that she took such delight in such books as "The Caxtons," and "A Chance Acquaintance," and some of the more serious things that came in her way,—an occasional volume of essays, or a biography. She found herself even ready to comply with a request that the principal of her school had made a week or two before the vacation began.

"I wish that every girl would bring me an account, written on four large pages of letter-size, describing the best book that she has read this summer. I am not going to ask simply for what would be called improving books. Fiction will answer as well, only, if you choose fiction, I hope that it will be something of real value, by an author whose work is literature."

When Miss Crawdon had made this request, Brenda



had paid little attention to it. It was not her custom to read serious books in the summer, and she objected strongly to having suggestions made for summer work.

What Miss Crawdon said, therefore, had gone in one ear, and out the other. But now, when Nora reminded her of it, it appeared to her a more attractive suggestion, and she agreed with Nora that it would be altogether worth while to keep a list of the books she was reading, and to select before October the one that seemed best worth giving an account of.

But the reading class, pleasant though it was, by no means absorbed the girls during these pleasant July days. There were no more bicycle trips, to be sure, as the weather was too sultry for that kind of thing. Yet many a long drive did the four friends have with Thomas and the quiet horses. It had become a fixed habit for Brenda to call for Amy to go with them on these excursion drives, and she and Nora thought it no discomfort to share the back seat of the carryall with their new friend, while Julia occupied the front seat with Thomas. The North Shore was always revealing new beauties to Julia, for it was her first summer there, and she could never get over her surprise that so near the sea there should be woods that were so beautiful, and roads along which the loveliest wild flowers were to be found. When they could do no better, they would come home laden with ox-eye daisies, with which to fill the vases in the dining-room, or with yellow tiger lilies, or with other blossoms whose hiding-place was known to Amy.



Sometimes they lingered on the way to gratify Julia's desire for a more beautiful view of the sea from some point which she had not before visited, and sometimes their drive had no definite object. Occasionally they stopped to pay a call on some girl whom they knew. For the summer residents were all now at their places, and Brenda had many friends in the handsome houses scattered along the shore. It was all very charming to Amy, and all very new, this comfortable, care-free life of which she thus had an occasional glimpse. It is true that she could not always join in the conversation, because she was not thoroughly well-informed in its little personalities, and girls of sixteen have little to say to another that is not in the nature of a personality. But Amy kept her ears and her eyes open, and she learned many things that in the future were likely to be of service to her. She learned, for one thing, to be a little frivolous; and she learned that while it is not necessary to pretend to opinions that do not belong to one, it is no more necessary in a general conversation to say all that one thinks. Self-restraint becomes a very important quality when five or six eager girls begin to discuss excitedly some subject in which they are very much interested.

In fact, it is the girl with the most self-restraint who is apt to come out with flying colors in the end. Self-restraint was a natural quality which Amy had always possessed. Yet, with it, she had also had the habit of holding rather firmly to her own opinion, when once it had been expressed. She really stood in need of some influence



by which the angles of her disposition could be rounded off. If any one had told her that she stood greatly in need of this kind of discipline, she would probably have taken offence at the suggestion. But this was what was happening under the intercourse with Brenda and her friends. They all expressed themselves strongly on most points on which they had any opinion whatever, — “in italics,” Amy had said to her mother. But their views so often seemed absurd to the more logical Amy, that she at once perceived the folly of any one’s going to an extreme in expressing herself; and thus she became aware that her own way of looking at things had sometimes been a little too narrow.

When, therefore, the others plunged into a subject on which she had no very definite prejudices, she would usually take part in the discussion. She liked the sensation of finding herself moved, first by this argument, then by that. Then, for the very reason that she allowed herself to consider the question — whether it related to golf, or dress, or even some thing with a literary tinge — in a perfectly unbiassed way, she was often called upon for a final judgment in a fashion that was often very flattering. “Now, what do you think, Amy?” Brenda, or perhaps Nora would say, and Amy would give her opinion in a judicial manner that, if it did not settle the matter, at least had considerable effect on the speakers. But when the subject was one on which she had strong views, in spite of her resolution, she sometimes found it hard to keep still, or to give her opinion without occasioning offence. The isolated



life which Amy had led, isolated at least as far as other girls were concerned, until she met Brenda, had given her great independence.

Julia did not always accompany the other three on their drives and jaunts. She had a certain amount of definite work to do, as her preparation in modern languages had not been as thorough as the Radcliffe requirements prescribed. Then there was her music — no matter how hot the day, she spent a fixed amount of time practising, and it seemed to her that the very fact that she was occupied prevented her feeling the heat as her cousin and Nora did. But though she might not always go with Nora and Brenda, she knew that if she had gone, she would have been welcome. There was none of that feeling of being left out which the winter before had given her some uneasy moments.

Though Amy did not miss Fritz as much as she would have missed him a year before, had anything happened to interrupt their friendship, she still felt sore on the subject. In her inmost heart she felt that she ought to try to do something to bring about a reconciliation.

“Although we have n’t quarrelled, still I suppose that it comes almost to the same thing; but then I’m not to blame, and so I don’t see why I ought to take the first step.”

On further reflection, Amy decided that she would not take the first step. No, she really would not. If Fritz enjoyed the society of his new friends so much, why she would be contented with her new friends, and yet —



Ah! that was just it. Amy felt the need of the appreciation that Fritz had always given her when she read a new poem to him. She would not venture to read anything she had written to Brenda or Nora; and as for Julia, why she would never dare talk on the subject of her poetry with a girl who had just taken examinations for college.



## XVI

### ABSENT-MINDEDNESS

"OH, Nora, just think of it! I never was so surprised. Agnes is going to be married, and probably this autumn before we return to town. Oh, I wish that you could stay. A wedding is such fun!" and Brenda danced around waving a letter which she held in her hand.

"I'm afraid that I don't understand. Agnes married! Why, I thought that she was in Paris," responded Nora.

"Well, so she is, or she was. But she's coming back. Probably she has sailed; let me see — 'if the passage is favorable, I may reach Boston by the sixth of August.' Why, that is hardly a week! I wonder what she'll bring me. I'm sure it will be something lovely. She has such perfect taste!"

"But I did n't know that she was engaged," said Nora.

"Neither did I," replied Brenda. "It's one of the things that they did n't tell me until the last minute. I believe mamma and papa have known for some time. He's an artist, and they're going to live in Paris. He's in New York now, and papa is going on to see him and meet Agnes next week. He came over by himself; but Agnes is coming back with the Waterfords. They've been abroad for a year."



Although Brenda's rendering of the news was a trifle incoherent, Nora and Julia soon had a more connected account of Agnes's prospects from Mrs. Barlow. The engagement was not exactly a surprise to Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, as they had had much correspondence regarding it with their daughter and Ralph Weston, her fiancé. They had heard such good reports of him from their old friends, the Waterfords, in whose care Agnes had been during her year in Paris, that, without seeing the young man, on the strength of his letters, they had given their consent. Yet to Brenda the engagement was news, and perhaps if she had known how many letters had passed between Rockley and Paris on the subject of this engagement, she might have felt a little hurt that she had been left out of the family consultations.

But now in all the plans for the wedding, Brenda was allowed to have something to say, and perhaps in the excitement of making her plans, she forgot that by her marriage her sister was to be removed from her even farther than she had been during the past year.

"For when she goes back to Europe, it is to be for three or four years," she said to Nora, "and I shall really be Miss Barlow. Yet it's strange, isn't it, that although I used to think that would be the most delightful thing in the world, I feel quite blue at the thought of losing Agnes."

"Perhaps you'll go to Paris to visit her."

"Oh, perhaps, but still it will seem very melancholy to have her going off to leave us. I didn't feel the same



when Caroline was married, because I was so very little then, but now — ”

“ Brenda, Brenda, I have something to show you; ask Nora to come, too.”

“ Yes, mamma,” and the two girls ran upstairs to see a photograph, which had just arrived, of Mr. Weston.

“ Oh, he is handsome, isn't he! Agnes didn't exaggerate,” and Brenda handed the picture to Nora for a closer examination.

“ I have decided to go to New York myself, Brenda,” said Mrs. Barlow, when the girls had expressed themselves fully on the subject of the photograph. “ Your father thinks that it will not be too hot for me, and Agnes has been away so long that I feel that I cannot see her soon enough.”

Now while this little ripple of excitement was passing over the Barlow family, Amy felt herself neglected by her friends. The reading club had failed to meet one day because Mrs. Barlow and the girls had been invited to Magnolia; and on the day of the departure of her parents for New York, Brenda had gone up to town, ostensibly to see them off. But, as Nora and Julia accompanied her, they managed to make the occasion a pleasure trip, by having luncheon at the Mayflower, and going down town afterwards to assist Mrs. Barlow in her shopping.

As Mr. and Mrs. Barlow were to take the six o'clock train, the girls did not actually see them off, but, instead, were sent back to Rockley at five o'clock, rather tired,



rather dusty, but fairly satisfied with the boxes of bonbons and little packages that they carried back as trophies of their day in town.

"Did you notice," asked Brenda, "those tired, half-sick, dirty-looking children around the station? — it made me awfully uncomfortable to see them."

"Oh, yes," responded Nora; "and there were a lot on that side street that we passed through. There was a little boy there who made me think of the Rosas. He looked so like John."

"I'm glad it was n't John; fancy how much better off he is in Shiloh. Except for your Bazaar, Brenda, he might be selling papers this evening in Hanover Street."

"Oh, it was n't my Bazaar," returned Brenda; "just think how many people had a hand in it."

"Well, I wish that we could have moved a dozen of those families out of the city. It almost made me cry to-day to see those two little fellows on the corner, just as we turned toward the station, squabbling over that small bunch of flowers that that lady in front of us gave them."

"Oh, I've often had children beg me for the flowers that I've worn at my belt. 'Give me a flower, lady,' they will cry, and, of course, I always give them what I have."

"It would be a good idea, wouldn't it, to send flowers to the city regularly, so that some of these children could have them?"

"Why, Brenda Barlow, do you mean that you have never heard of the flower mission! Why, dozens of baskets



of flowers are sent up to town every day through the summer, from all the country places around. Is it possible that you have never sent any up from Rockley?"

"I'm afraid that I never have," responded Brenda. "But it's a perfectly splendid idea, and I'll begin right away. We always have plenty of flowers to spare in our garden."

"You can send wild flowers, if you have n't anything else. Even daisies, arranged in large bunches, are very highly appreciated. I've heard my father speak of seeing them in the hospitals, and he says that the patients are very grateful for flowers."

"But how could I get them to the city, and what would become of them after they get there?" asked Brenda, after a moment's thought.

"Why, Brenda," interposed Julia, "I should be glad to pay any charges. There'd be freight, or express, or something of that kind. But I wonder whom we'd send them to."

"I could find out from my father; I think that there is a regular place for the flower mission. I believe that that is what they call it. At any rate, Edith could tell you. She has always been in the habit of sending flowers to town. Had n't you ever heard about it?"

"Well, if I ever did, I've forgotten. You see, until this last winter, I never had much to do with — with —"

"Philanthropy," and Julia added to the word with which she had helped her cousin express her meaning. "That was only because you were so young, Brenda."



People have to come gradually to take an interest in such things."

"It's very good in you, Julia, to be willing to pay the expense of getting the flowers to town."

"Oh, no, it isn't. You know that I have money to spare, and I love to spend it in such ways as this. Before you spoke, I was thinking about those children and the flowers, and it made me feel quite melancholy that we were going back to the seashore where it is so green and beautiful, and so cool compared with the city. Another summer, perhaps we can plan to do more for the poor little things who have so little to enjoy."

The train had now gone far beyond the bridges near the mouth of the Charles and the Mystic, past Charlestown, where the grim walls of the State-prison and the gray spire of Bunker Hill Monument were seen fairly near at hand. They had passed through the outskirts of one or two less interesting suburbs, and now they were skirting the broad Lynn marshes, bounded far to the west by woods and distant hills, and again, looking toward the east, they had glimpses of the cool, blue sea. Yet Julia, delightful though she found the scenery through which the swift express passed, still had a feeling of dissatisfaction with herself. Why should it be her lot to have in prospect the delights of a summer by the sea, when all those poor, pinched little children must spend the long, hot weeks in the worst streets of a crowded city.

"Julia," cried Nora, "you look as if you were dreaming.



Did you notice, Brenda, the strange expression in her eyes?"

"I believe that I was half in a dream," said Julia, "but I am wide enough awake now." During the rest of the journey, the three girls laughed and chatted as if they had had nothing more serious than shopping on their minds.

Now it happened that on this very day when Brenda and the others went to the city, Amy, feeling a little lonely, decided to go out rowing. It was in the afternoon when she started, for she wisely waited until the sun had moderated.

She had to walk nearly a mile to reach the little cove near which lived an old fisherman from whom she was in the habit of hiring a boat. He charged her so little for it, that Amy occasionally could afford this luxury. The boat was cheap because it was shabby, old-fashioned in design, and never in demand. Amy, indeed, and Fritz were the only persons who ever hired it, and the old man would have been willing to let Amy have it for nothing. "She has such a pleasant way with her," he said to his wife, "that I'd be almost willing to let her have it for nothing, and she's as careful with it as if she was my own daughter, I'm sure of that." Now although the old boat was shabby, it was safe and strong. Mrs. Redmond had made sure of its character before giving Amy permission to go out in it alone. Mrs. Redmond herself had given Amy her first lessons in rowing, and she knew that in the neighborhood of the cove there was little chance of



any mishap to her daughter; for the young girl was the fortunate possessor of strong arms and a cool head. Fritz was not quite as fond of the water as Amy, and during the early part of the present summer she had seldom gone out in the boat.

But on this particular day, she knew that the exercise would do her good, and indeed when she felt herself gliding over the water, her light-heartedness returned to her, and she bent to the oars, and pulled toward a distant point where she meant to land for a little while. When the point was reached, Amy managed to pull her boat to just the right spot on the little beach where, by measuring the distance carefully with her eye, she could step ashore to a rock. There was an iron staple in the rock, which had evidently been used for mooring purposes for a long time; Amy fastened her rope to the staple, saw that the boat was in water enough to float it, and then, stepping from this rock to another nearer the land, and then to another, clambered up the side of the cliff which made the extremity of the point. There she sat down, in a sheltered nook which she and Fritz had discovered long before, and began to read. Her book was absorbing,—indeed did any boy or girl of fifteen fail to find “Off the Skelligs” absorbing?—and she sat there for more than an hour,—no, for more than two hours, regardless of time. At length she judged by the number of pages that she had covered, that she had been there longer than she had intended to be. But what was her surprise, in looking down toward the beach, to find that she had made an absurd mistake. The



tide, instead of coming in, had been steadily ebbing during the two hours. She had been very careless, and it seemed as if she might have to pay rather dearly for her mistake.

For there was the boat left high and dry upon the beach, and she saw that it was going to be very hard for her to push it off. Nevertheless, as she must make the attempt, she hurried down to it. Had the tide been high, as she had calculated, she would merely have untied the rope, leaning over from the end of the boat, pushed against the rock with her oar, and, presto, she would have glided off into deep water. But now!

Poor Amy looked about helplessly; first she must get her boat down to the water. It did not seem as if this could be the same boat that she had made skim along the waves a few hours before. Now it was clumsy, unyielding and — yes, Amy actually called it obstinate, as she pushed and pushed, and only succeeded in pressing the bow a little more deeply into the sands. It was hopeless. She found it absolutely impossible to get it down to the water, and to wait until the tide returned under the boat, was altogether out of the question. It was almost equally out of the question for her to think of walking home. She was four or five miles away by the road, and she did not dare leave the boat. It was about a mile, too, to the nearest house, which stood back some distance from the shore. Of course she might go there, and perhaps find a man who could help her. But this would be putting some strange person to a great deal of trouble, and Amy knew that she was too timid to ask the favor. Besides, she did not care to leave



the boat for the time that would be required to go to the house. So she leaned disconsolately against the rock, blaming herself for her carelessness and almost ready to cry,—she, the strong-minded Amy,—as she saw no way out of the difficulty.

Presently she heard a loud “halloo,” and looking up in the direction whence the cry came, at the other end of the beach, she saw a boy and a bicycle. The boy was not riding, but as he pushed his bicycle before him over the soft sand, Amy felt her heart throb quickly,—yes, it certainly was Fritz, and she gave back an answering call. It made no difference to her that Fritz was accompanied by the other boy, the one whom she had so often seen riding with him lately.

“Two will be better than one to overcome this monster,” she said, as she gazed at the great bulk of the clumsy boat.

“Hello, Amy,” cried Fritz, “trying to row on dry land? You might as well give it up. You can’t do it.”

“Oh, Fritz,” cried Amy, “is n’t this a ridiculous thing? It was one of my fits of absent-mindedness; I have n’t had one before for a long time. But I forgot that the tide was going out. I might have known, because the water was n’t very deep when I pushed up here. Do you suppose we could get it off together?”

“I don’t see why not,” said Fritz; “there are three of us.”

Amy looked toward the other boy, who had been approaching very slowly. He was not yet within hearing distance. Perhaps he had heard of the falling-out between Amy and Fritz, and politely kept at a fair distance to give



them a chance to make up, or at least to say all that they had to say without a third person present to criticise.

But although, as you may have observed, Amy and Fritz for some time had been cherishing a certain amount of ill-feeling against each other, when they met they wasted no time in fault-finding or even in apologies. Fritz saw that Amy was in trouble, and he meant to help her. Amy as soon as she heard Fritz's voice, knew that he was still her friend. There was no need of words to tell this. Indeed, when two friends have fallen out, whether they are boys or girls, if they are really friends, they ought to be able to make up without any great amount of explanation or apologizing. Of course if one has really done the other an injury, proper amends should be made. But misunderstandings between friends are so often the result of a little false pride, of the fact that one has expected the other to say or do something that has been left unsaid or undone. When, therefore, the time for reconciliation comes, and it always will come with those who have been really friends, "Least said, soonest mended" is a very good motto.

"Come here, Ben," called Fritz, and the other boy, laying his wheel flat on the sand, ran towards him.

"Come, lend a hand with this boat. It's got to be pushed off into the water, and it's going to be hard to start it." At last, however, by prodding and pushing, a start was made, and then a further push sent the boat a little nearer to the water. Amy herself had to help; and although the three put their whole strength into it,











they had all they could do to get the boat to the water's edge.

"If you could ride my wheel," said Fritz, "I'd row home; but of course you could n't do that."

"Oh, I won't have any trouble getting home, when once I'm out in deep water," said Amy.

"Well, if you are in one of those absent-minded fits, you might row in exactly the opposite direction from the one you ought to go in, and that would be decidedly awkward for you to find yourself bound for Nahant or some other place in the direction of the city."

"Oh, no," rejoined Amy, without losing her temper, "I'm not so foolish as that, I can assure you. I've come to my senses, and if you can only push me off, I'll get safely into port."

"Well then, take your place," said Fritz, "and we'll do the best we can." But the weight of Amy, added to that of the boat, made the task very difficult.

Amy leaned from the stern, and, using her oar as a lever, tried to push off. But it was of no use. Although there were a few inches of water at the bow, there seemed to be no way of getting the boat into water that would float her.

Turning to the other boy, Fritz said a word or two that Amy did not hear. But the result of what he said she saw very soon.

"Oh, you must n't—you really must n't!" she cried. But the boys paid no heed to her.

"There she's moving," said Fritz; "sit down, Amy, you can't stand up in a moving boat."



Amy obeyed meekly; she realized that the boat was moving, and she picked up the other oar, ready to row when she should feel that there was water under the boat.

"There, don't come any further," she cried. "You'll get your feet wet."

"Oh, no, I won't," replied Fritz, "they are wet already;" and Amy saw that the boys were standing in water that came above their ankles.

"The worst is yet to come; push on, Ben;" and still deeper the boys waded into the water, while Amy exclaimed, a little uneasily, "Oh, what would your uncle say, to see your feet so wet!"

"Methinks he may never have the chance to say anything about it," rejoined Fritz.

"There, you're off!" and, giving the boat a final push, he and Ben stood back, while Amy, in gratitude, waved one of her oars at them.

"Oh, by the way," called Fritz, as she bent herself in the attitude of an oarswoman, "Ben says that he has n't been introduced to you."

Ben looked somewhat embarrassed, as Fritz, at the top of his voice, performed the ceremony of introduction.

"Miss Redmond, Mr. Ben Creighton."

"Good-bye, Fritz, good-bye, Mr. Creighton; many thanks, and don't catch cold."

"And remember where you're bound," retorted Fritz, teasingly. But Amy took no offence. It seemed to her just then as if she and Fritz would never again fall out.



## XVII

### A VISIT TO MISS SOUTH

AUGUST, that gay seashore month, promised to give the Barlow family even more than the usual gayeties of the season. The arrival of Agnes, the visit of Mr. Weston, the preparations for the wedding, added to the other happenings of the month, kept Brenda in a whirl of excitement. Nora went up to the mountains the day before the arrival of Agnes. "I should like to stay to welcome the bride that is to be, for Agnes and I are old friends," she said, as she and Brenda and Julia paced up and down the station platform waiting for the train.

"She'll be disappointed not to see you; but you must promise to return for the wedding — the very first day of September."

"We'll see," replied Nora. "If mamma comes down, if there's room for me —"

"Oh, if you can come only for the day, you must be here. But I want you to keep it in mind. Mamma will arrange it. I am sure that she has some plans now, although I forgot to ask her before she went New York."

"Well, you'll know the day after to-morrow just what her plans are. There, that's the train, isn't it? Well, good-bye, Julia, good-bye, Brenda. I've had a perfectly lovely time. Oh, Brenda, don't forget to let me know



if you find your Italian. The gypsy's prophecy is beginning to come true. Well, good-bye again."

"Now, don't forget to write to me as soon as you arrive."

"Oh, no, I won't forget; good-bye;" and with a puff and a shriek the train was off, and Brenda and Julia turned away from the station.

"What was the gypsy's prophecy?" asked Julia, as the two cousins walked homeward.

For a moment Brenda hesitated. She had never told any one about her visit to the encampment, and on the whole she was disinclined to speak of it. She knew that Nora, too, had kept the secret until this last minute. Why, then, had she been so foolish as to speak of it now?

"I can't explain very well," she said to Julia, after a few minutes' hesitation. "Nora and I had our fortunes told the other day by a gypsy, just by having our hands read, you know, and she said some things that seemed very interesting,—that is, they would be, if they should come true. She *did* say that she could see a wedding in the family, and that it would come off very soon. But the funny thing is, that I never thought of Agnes. I wondered whose wedding it could be. How do you suppose she knew?"

Julia smiled at the eagerness in her cousin's tone. "I imagine that a wedding is part of the regulation prophecy of every fortune-teller. It would be strange if they didn't hit the mark once in a while. But it wouldn't do generally to pin one's faith to what a fortune-teller says.



How did you happen to consult one, Brenda? Did Aunt Anna know?"

"Oh, Julia," cried Brenda, in the old impatient tone, "I don't have to ask permission for everything I do, as if I were a baby."

"I did n't mean that," replied Julia, quickly, "I was only thinking that no fortune-tellers had come my way this summer. But of course there's no great harm in consulting them, if you don't put too much faith in them."

"Well, at any rate, here's a wedding going to happen a little more than a month after the gypsy foretold it," rejoined Brenda, triumphantly.

Julia said no more, and the conversation turned to other things. But Brenda felt slightly uncomfortable. She hoped that no stray remark of Julia's would set her mother to inquiring about the gypsy, for she felt pretty sure that Mrs. Barlow would disapprove of the whole affair.

"To change the subject," she exclaimed, after a moment of silence, "we'd better go over to Marblehead Neck tomorrow to see Miss South. It is the only day we shall have before Agnes arrives, and I know you want to see her."

"Perhaps you don't care about going yourself, Brenda."

Miss South was one of the teachers at Miss Crawdon's school, and Brenda had never seen as much of her as Julia had; or, as the other girls put it, "Julia was terribly devoted to Miss South." Brenda, on the other hand, was n't inclined to be devoted to any one.

"Oh, I'd like very well to see Miss South," said Brenda,



"and I'm curious to see Madame Du Launay. I've never really seen her close to, except, of course, that day at the Bazaar, and I'd like to meet her face to face."

"We can't be sure of seeing her, even if we go to call on Miss South; so you must n't be disappointed."

"Oh, no, I shall be glad to see Miss South herself. I really do like her, Julia, even though I may not have seemed to appreciate her last winter. She was a perfect brick in the way she helped us with the Rosas, and I suppose that she'll have more or less to tell us about them now."

So the next day, Julia and Brenda went by train to Marblehead Neck; that is, they changed cars for Devereux, and then went out in the barge to the Neck, over the causeway and up the hill, a pleasant drive with fine views of the ocean.

Madame Du Launay had expressed a strong desire to spend August near the sea, and Miss South had been able to find a house out near the light-house on the Point where she and her grandmother were to be the only boarders. Or, perhaps, I ought to have said, her grandmother, herself, Fidessa, the Italian greyhound, and Jane, the maid. In the order of importance, I am not certain but that Fidessa should stand next to Madame Du Launay herself. Miss South, whom Julia had learned to value so highly, had been the centre of a certain amount of romance the preceding spring. At the time when Julia and Brenda and their friends had carried out their plan for a bazaar at Edith's, the proceeds of which were to benefit the Rosas, a dramatic



thing had happened. On the afternoon of the Bazaar, Madame Du Launay, a wealthy and eccentric old lady who had taken a fancy to Julia, had visited it, and had bought liberally of the pretty things displayed there. Suddenly, in the midst of her purchasing, she fainted away. Later it was learned that Miss South had been the innocent cause of this fainting spell. For when the old lady's eyes fell on her, she was overcome by Miss South's resemblance to her own dead daughter. To make a long story short, Miss South proved to be old Madame Du Launay's granddaughter, of whose presence in Boston she was wholly unaware, until she saw her at the Bazaar.

Miss South, of course, had known for some time that the eccentric Madame Du Launay was her grandmother, but she had hesitated to intrude upon her, because the old lady had acted so unkindly toward her father and mother. But the affair at the Bazaar had brought about a complete reconciliation between grandmother and grandchild, and Miss South had promised Madame Du Launay that while she lived she would make her home with her.

When the barge drew up in front of the cottage, Miss South and Fidessa ran down to the road to meet the girls. Fidessa, indeed, jumped and circled about in the frantic fashion in which she always displayed her joy.

"It's all for you, Julia," cried Brenda; "Fidessa never cared much for me. No, keep your paws off me, you little wretch," she concluded, as the graceful dog, without much discrimination, threw herself first upon one girl then on the other, to the probable destruction of their foulard gowns.



"Down, down, Fidessa," and, in obedience to Miss South, the greyhound crouched at her feet for a second, then, with a run and a leap, she reached the piazza, where she stood panting with excitement, as they walked up the steps.

"Much ado about nothing," said Julia, patting Fidessa on the head, and this delicate attention so overcame the little creature that she jumped into Julia's arms, where she cuddled very contentedly with her head on the young girl's shoulder.

"Now come out on the side piazza, where we can have a good view of the harbor. Is n't it lovely?" and Miss South arranged some wicker chairs so that they could look over toward the town. Then she pulled forward a round wicker table, and, excusing herself, went into the house for a moment. When she reappeared, she was followed by Jane, who carried a tray with glasses, plates, and a biscuit jar.

"The lemonade will be here in a minute," said Miss South, "and in the mean time we can enjoy the æsthetic pleasure of the view. My grandmother is lying down, but she hopes to see you before you go."

"Does she like it here?" asked Julia, with interest.

"Well, of course she has hardly been here long enough to tell, but she feels sure that she will."

As Julia glanced about her, she could not help contrasting the very simple surroundings with those to which Madame Du Launay had been accustomed. Her Boston house was large and imposing, and filled with all kinds of beautiful objects. But the curtains were usually drawn, and the house was so far back from the street that it had



little view, and it seemed gloomy, shut in from the ordinary world outside.

Miss South, perhaps, read Julia's thoughts.

"Come inside for a moment," she said, "and let me show you our sitting-room." The little hall into which they stepped from the piazza was covered with plain matting. But inside the sitting-room, what a change from the simple surroundings outside! A large cashmere rug covered the floor almost completely. A tall folding screen with painted sides, across one corner, softened the severity of the angles. A Persian scarf draped the mantelpiece, and near a window was a small table with a handsome afternoon-tea-set of silver and china. The round centre table was laden with books and magazines, and two or three easy-chairs and footstools added to the comfort of the room. Several of the pieces of furniture, and some of the pictures on the wall were familiar to Julia. She had often seen them at Madame Du Launay's house in town.

"That is it," she said. "You are trying to make your grandmother feel perfectly at home by having all her own things about her. What a fine idea!"

"It is just the same in her bedroom," said Miss South, smiling, "and I really believe that this is what makes her so contented. At her age, you know, it is very hard to be moved, even for a few months, far from one's own familiar belongings. It is because she dreaded this kind of change, I believe, that my grandmother has been so unwilling of late years to go away from the city in the summer. Why, I found that she had not had any change



of air for eight years, although her doctor had constantly recommended it."

"Well, it's all your doing, no doubt, that she started off this summer," said Brenda, as they walked back to the piazza.

Miss South smiled in assent, and Julia longed to ask her if she found Madame Du Launay easy to get along with at all times. It had been a matter of general report in Boston that no one could please her, and that those who were under the same roof with her, generally had a rather hard time. Naturally, of course, such a question as this could not be put to the old lady's granddaughter, and Julia thought that Miss South must, indeed, be a wonderful person, to get on so well with Madame Du Launay — even though the old lady was her grandmother.

"Now, about the Rosas," said Miss South, "for I know that you both are anxious to hear how they are progressing."

"We certainly are," replied Brenda, "in fact, I have been dying to ask about them ever since we came."

"In the first place, Angelina told me about meeting you and Nora on the train. I did not tell her that I had already heard about this from you. It seemed better to have her make a full confession."

"Confession?" There was a note of interrogation in Brenda's voice.

"Yes, you may have thought it strange to find her in Lynn. Indeed, she had no right to be there. It is true that she announced to her mother that she was going, but this was just when she was on the point of starting,



and the poor woman had no power to stop her. Angelina took what money there was in the house, and departed in spite of her mother's anger. She said that she was tired of Shiloh, and that she wished to pay a visit in Lynn. She also announced that she might spend the rest of the summer in Lynn, if she could get a place in a factory. Poor Mrs. Rosa is so easy-going that she did not know how to prevent this; and, with her bundle of clothes under her arm, Angelina had gone to the station before her mother saw any way to stop her. You may be glad to know, however, that your meeting her, and your word of advice, had much to do with bringing about her return to Shiloh. She is a flighty little thing, and the sight of you, Brenda, and Nora (so she afterwards confessed to me) reminded her of all that you and the other girls had done for her and her mother, and so she thought that to show her appreciation of it all she ought to go back to Shiloh, and give it another trial. At least, that was the way she put it to me when I went to look her up after Julia wrote me that she had been in Lynn."

Julia looked rather sober during this recital.

"I am afraid that we are going to have trouble with Angelina. If she runs off whenever she has the notion, it is going to be very hard for her mother. Do you think that Mrs. Rosa is improving?"

"It is rather too soon for any decided change to be seen. But the fresh air, and the exercise that she gets every day in the garden, is working wonders. Her color is better, and she seems much brighter."



"I hope that the other children are more contented than Angelina. They ought to be, after we took so much trouble."

"Oh, yes, I really think that they are. John is devoting himself to some tomato vines, and he is picking up a good many odd dimes and quarters running errands, and helping the farmers in the neighborhood. Even the little boys work in the garden; only I am afraid that Manuel is in the habit of digging up his crops, to see whether his things are growing well at the roots. Nobody knows just what he expects to find; but his experiments are rather disastrous to his garden."

"How Nora would laugh to hear that! She considers Manuel her own especial property," and Brenda waved her handkerchief at Fidessa, who had risen from her cushion in a playful mood.

"The Rosas have made a good beginning," said Miss South, "and I think that in time Mrs. Rosa will be perfectly contented in Shiloh, even though she has n't neighbors to run in and gossip with her as at the North End."

"But Angelina?"

"Oh, well, even Angelina will be less discontented in the autumn, when school re-opens. She has a rather active mind, and with her school-mates to talk to, she will contrive probably to make herself a centre of interest. That is really what she wants, — to be of more consequence in the eyes of her neighbors than she has been. The trip to Lynn will furnish her with subjects of conversation for the rest of the summer."



"Don't you think we might go out to Shiloh some time before autumn?" asked Brenda. "You know, Julia, that we will have to spend a day or two in town having our gowns fitted—our wedding gowns; doesn't that sound romantic?"

As Miss South looked somewhat mystified, the cousins told her about Agnes and her approaching wedding, and Brenda waxed eloquent in her description of the way in which the whole affair would probably be carried out.

"It will be twice as much fun for us as a wedding in town, because the church is so picturesque; and it'll be so delightful to have a house full of guests, and all kinds of things going on. I don't really see where we'll put them all."

To return to Angelina; after Brenda had almost exhausted herself in forecasting the wedding festivities, and after Miss South had expressed the proper amount of interest in her account of things, Julia returned to the subject of Angelina.

"As Brenda has suggested it, I think that we might go up to Shiloh this month or next. I'd like very much to see the Rosas flourishing in the midst of their summer garden."

"How near that steam yacht looks!" said Brenda; "it almost seems as if we could speak to the people on board."

"I'm afraid that they wouldn't hear you. But here, take this glass, and you'll be able to read the name."

"Why, it's the 'Opal'!" cried Brenda. "That is



the Anstruthers' boat. It went on the cruise to Mt. Desert, and its being here means that Philip and Tom will be back soon with the 'Balloon,' and cousin Edward, too. Dear me, how gay it will be! The reading club will languish for the present, there will be so many other things to do."

"The reading class?"

Miss South looked interested, and this time it was Julia who undertook the task of explanation. She told Miss South all about their pilgrimage to Marblehead, and the interesting things that they had heard from Amy about the ancient landmarks, and made it clear that out of this had come their great desire to read rather more serious books than they were in the habit of reading in the summer.

"Why, I thought that you were in the habit of reading rather serious books!" and Miss South smiled appreciatively on Julia.

"Oh, it was n't started for Julia," said Brenda, pleasantly, "nor for Amy, who has read nearly everything, it seems to me. But it was for persons like me, whose heads are half empty, that the reading class was started."

"Oh, Brenda!"

"Yes, Julia, it's so. Generally, I should n't care to read in the summer. But this class is n't so bad, because we're not obliged to read the same books, nor the same amount every week. Perhaps, in spite of the wedding, I can make a spurt some day when I feel industrious, and catch up with you and Amy."



"Amy must be a very intelligent girl, to know so much about Marblehead."

"Yes, she is, Miss South; she's only my age, but she knows heaps more, because she's studied at home, and her mother reads everything, too. I hope she'll go with us to Salem. We're going there next."

"Perhaps I can go with you, too, when you go to Salem," said Miss South; "I should like to, if I can leave my grandmother for the day. I have never been there, and it's one of the places that I have always wished to visit. I'd like to have been with you on your Marblehead pilgrimage; but I can make up for that by taking frequent little excursions while we're here. It's only a few minutes across in the ferry. Oh, excuse me for a minute!"

And Miss South hastened off as the silvery tinkle of a little bell sounded from the house. In a few minutes she returned.

"My grandmother is very sorry, but this happens to be one of the days when she is very tired, and so she cannot see you; but she hopes that you will come over soon again, and she regrets that she has had to miss you to-day."

"We are very sorry, too," responded Julia; "although it has been delightful to have had this hour with you. But it is time for us to be starting toward home."

"When will the next barge pass?" asked Brenda.

"In just five minutes," said Miss South, looking at her watch. "It's nearly half-past four."



“Dear me! Then we'll have barely time to catch the five train. Come, Julia, we must hurry!” and with a hasty good-bye to Miss South, the impetuous Brenda rushed down the steps, while Miss South and Julia followed more slowly. Brenda had time for a farewell frolic with Fidessa before the barge appeared.

“You surely will go with us to Salem,” were Julia's parting words.

“I surely will,” replied Miss South, “unless —” but the starting off of the barge prevented her completing the sentence.



## XVIII

### A PROSPECTIVE BROTHER-IN-LAW

FOR a day or two after her sister's arrival Brenda went about as if half in a dream. It was quite upsetting to have a romance going on right under her eyes. For this was the view that she took of the engagement. Although an artist, Agnes had always been called the practical one of the family, and the year before her departure for Europe she had been so busy, so absorbed in her art, that her mother had with difficulty persuaded her to keep up her interest in society. Brenda remembered so well the family discussions of that year, in which Agnes tried to beg off from this party, or that reception, on the plea that she needed all her waking hours for her painting, and that her evenings ought to be given to rest.

"But you know, Agnes, the condition on which your father and I gave our permission for you to study regularly at the Art School."

"Oh, yes, I remember."

"It was that you were not to cut yourself off from your friends, — from our friends."

"But I don't mean to do that."

"Well, that is what it will amount to, if you continue to decline all the invitations sent you. You are too young a girl for that."



"Oh, but, mamma, if you realized how I long to be a great painter, and how I hate all this trouble of dressing up and making myself agreeable to people, especially to men who are so stupid; really, I wish that I need not do it."

Brenda remembered these discussions, and she recalled (for it was only two or three years before) that Agnes would often make her work the excuse when some particularly agreeable man would come to call, — "agreeable," at least from Brenda's point of view, although apparently less agreeable from that of Agnes.

"They could n't even see her when they called on Sunday afternoons," and Brenda smiled at the remembrance; "for she was always off somewhere studying cloud effects or something of that kind. She used to say that she thought that the average young man was the stupidest creature. Why, I thought that she went to Paris on purpose to avoid society and to give all her time to her work. But here she is spending every minute that she can with Ralph Weston, when she really ought to be doing other things. Well, perhaps he is n't an average young man. That's the kind she used to say she didn't care for."

Yet if he was n't the "average young man" from the point of view of Agnes, Brenda found her prospective brother-in-law delightful. It took her several days to call him Ralph to his face, and behind his back she was very apt to say "Ralph Weston." But he pleased her exceedingly by treating her exactly as if she were grown-up, that is, he often asked her opinion on important subjects,



and he never teased her as the others did. Once or twice in the course of the first week he had invited her to drive with him, and although this may have been possible only because Agnes was too busy to drive, still the attention was none the less agreeable to Brenda.

In addition to the pleasure of welcoming her sister and Mr. Weston, Brenda had the excitement of looking at her presents. While Agnes had brought nothing that was extremely valuable, there were ever so many pretty little trinkets such as can be found only in Paris. Two or three little stick-pins in curious designs especially pleased her. "They go right to my heart!" she had exclaimed on opening the little box containing them.

"Now don't let them go right to your heart," Agnes had said. "We cannot have any funerals here, — at least until after the wedding;" and all the others, even Julia, had laughed, — all excepting Ralph. It was by refraining from laughing at what Brenda called the wrong place, that Ralph had made rapid advance in her regard.

A half-dozen of the exquisitely embroidered Swiss handkerchiefs had also been among her presents. "I'm afraid that you have forgotten the difficulty that Brenda has in keeping her handkerchiefs," and Mrs. Barlow shook her head warningly, as Brenda held up each delicate bit of cambric for admiration.

"Oh, no, I have n't forgotten; but Brenda is so much older now that I am sure there is little danger of her losing these."

Whereupon Brenda decided to reward Agnes's faith in



her by taking the best of care of this gift of hers, and keeping the handkerchiefs — well, perhaps until she could show them to her in Paris. It is n't worth while, perhaps, to enumerate the liberty scarfs, pretty fans, and last, but not least, the exquisite hat which Agnes produced from her trunk for Brenda. Moreover, whatever there was for Brenda, had its duplicate for Julia. This had been part of the instructions sent to Agnes when her mother wrote her regarding her return.

"I don't see how you ever got it all in. They are so very strict now at the Custom House," said Julia, after thanking her cousin most warmly, and admiring all the pretty things that she had brought to others.

"Oh, I had n't so very much of my own. I am going to get the most of my trousseau when I return to Paris. So the Custom House people thought that I was n't bringing in any more than the proper amount for a young woman who had been abroad a year or two."

"Well, they were very sensible. I should have used my influence against the Administration [does the child know what she means? thought Agnes] if they had taken any of my pretty things away from you."

"I'm glad they did n't confiscate my lace scarf," said Mrs. Barlow, holding up the filmy web that had been Agnes's chief present to her.

"I bought that in Brussels last spring," said Agnes, "direct from the woman who made it. She was the most fascinating little creature, and to see her work was the most marvellous thing. With that cushion before



her, and all those pins, it did n't seem as if she had the least design in her work. But somehow the pattern grew right under our eyes."

"Did you see her making this very scarf?"

"Oh, no, Brenda; but one that was going to be very like it. Yet I pitied her. In spite of her skill, it must be very trying to the nerves."

"And to her eyes."

"Oh, yes, it is very injurious to the eyes. But then we must have lace," and Agnes shrugged her shoulders.

As Agnes was naturally occupied with many things connected with her wedding, and as Mrs. Barlow, too, had much to occupy her, it fell to Julia and Brenda to take Mr. Weston sight-seeing. To display their newly acquired knowledge of Marblehead, one of their first expeditions was to go over much of the ground of the former pilgrimage.

"Although I've lived chiefly in New York, you must n't think that I know nothing about Massachusetts," the young man said, laughingly, as the girls began to explain why Marblehead was worth seeing. "I know that it used to be a great sea-port, and that Marblehead men rowed Washington across the Delaware. I know that it has one of the best harbors on the coast, and that the government has named Cruiser No. 10, 'Marblehead.' I know —"

"There, there!" exclaimed Brenda, "I do believe that you know more than we do about it. Perhaps you've seen all the places that we intend showing you."



"Oh, no, I've never set foot in Marblehead; but I know that Elbridge Gerry was born there, and Joseph Story, and Commodore Tucker, and Moll Pitcher, and Agnes Surriage, and a large number of Massachusetts fishermen —"

"Did you have a guide-book under your pillow last night?" asked Julia quietly, with a sly glance at Brenda.

"There," he said, "that is exactly it; the guide-book has done it all."

"I thought I saw you reading it last evening. Uncle Robert said that he was going to bring one down from town, and when I saw him give you a yellowish pamphlet last evening I thought that it had a guide-book look."

"Nevertheless," said Mr. Weston, "I left it at home. I really do prefer human guides. Suppose you take me to some place where you have n't been yourself. Did n't you say that you had n't been on the old burying-hill. It always delights me to read odd epitaphs. Perhaps we may find some worth smiling at."

Accordingly, they climbed the rocky hill, which is on the outskirts of the town, but a short distance from many of the old houses.

"What a superb view!" and Mr. Weston threw back his head and shoulders to get a deeper draught of the fresh air at the summit.

"Is n't that south, off there?" asked Brenda, pointing off toward the sea.

"Yes, it certainly is," answered Julia.

"Then that must be the South Shore that we see, that blue line off there in the distance."



"That 's a logical conclusion," said Mr. Weston.

"Well, I only spoke of it because I was surprised to think that we can see so far. It must be twenty-five miles away."

"This seems a strange place for a burying-ground, up on the top of a stony hill," said Julia.

"Well, it is here because it used to be the churchyard, and the first church was put here because the early settlers wanted to feel sure that when they were in church they would n't be unexpectedly scalped. I *did* get this from my guide-book," he added, as he turned to Julia. "They used to have sentinels stationed outside who kept a sharp look-out for Indians or other enemies. Nothing could escape them at this height. They could see all that was happening on sea or land for some miles away."

"Now for the gravestones!" cried Brenda. "I wonder if we 'll find anything really queer."

You may say that this was not just the right spirit in which to approach a burying-ground, but Julia could not help exclaiming when she found one that read: —

HERE LIES Y<sup>e</sup> BODY  
OF MRS. MIRIAM GROSE  
WHO DE<sup>d</sup>D IN THE  
81ST YEAR OF HER  
AGE & LEFT 180 CHILDREN

"What!" exclaimed Brenda, running over to read the stone for herself. "Well, it really is," she added, as she looked at the inscription.

"Oh, you have n't read the whole of it. You are try-



ing to impose on me," said Mr. Weston, as he came up and read aloud the last two lines of the epitaph:—

GRAND CHILDREN AND  
GREAT GRAND CHILDREN.

"I wonder if she ever tried to invite them all to a birthday party. The Town House would hardly have held them all."

There were hardly any other epitaphs that deserved especial attention on account of their peculiarities, although many of the stones were quaintly and rudely carved, and there was one that they noted especially because it marked the resting-place of a negro slave. Near the summit of the hill they all paused in solemn thought for a moment, for the little monument commemorated the death by drowning of sixty-five Marblehead fishermen who were lost in ten vessels during a fierce storm off the Banks of Newfoundland more than fifty years ago.

Thinking of the sorrow that must have come to all these families, Brenda and Julia and Mr. Weston walked down the hill a little less gayly.

One afternoon the three went over to Gloucester, — a long expedition, as they had to change cars twice. But in the end they enjoyed it very much, and, as it happened, not one of the three had ever been there before. Mr. Weston insisted on going down on the wharves, and visiting the old fish houses. He found one or two odd characters, quite worth sketching, and he amused himself (and the girls, too, for that matter) by another kind of



"drawing." This, at least, was the term that Brenda applied to his manner of drawing out the old fishermen.

Julia begged to be taken out to Eastern Point to get a glimpse of an Old Maid's Paradise. Mr. Weston read statistics from a guide-book, and Julia quoted poetry, and they yielded so far to Brenda's wishes, as to take her down to a hotel, where she could sit on the piazza, and see a crowd of young people wandering back and forward to the beach, to the rocks toward the Golf Links, and where at last they had dinner in the vast dining-room into which the strains of a small orchestra wandered, in a rather hopeless competition with the clatter of dishes, and knives and forks.

They had almost a week of this pleasant wandering about, and Mr. Weston used his sketching-block almost as extravagantly as Brenda used her camera, and Julia wrote long pages in a note-book, which she intended to copy into her diary on her return home. Then in the evening, when Agnes and Ralph Weston sat apart at one end of the piazza, "looking at the stars," as Brenda said, Julia and Brenda talked over the doings of the day with Mr. and Mrs. Barlow. They had only a week for these pleasant jaunts, for at the end of that time Mr. Weston was to return to New York for a fortnight, while Brenda and Julia were to go off on little visits. During their absence, Agnes was to entertain several of her school friends. Her absence had cut her off from many of them, and now her marriage was to take her away for a still longer time. The absence of Julia and Brenda would



enable her to have a larger house-party than would have been possible with them both at home.

"Have you seen Amy this week?" asked Julia, as the two cousins were on their way to service on Sunday morning. The two girls always walked to church, and were very regular in their attendance. It was a particularly interesting little church, and it had been built by a very liberal-minded man a few years before for the use of the summer residents who did not care to go to one of the neighboring towns to church. Visiting clergymen of different denominations preached in it in turn, and hence people of different denominations attended it.

There was only one service a day, and Mr. Barlow required from his daughter the same regular attendance at the seashore that he expected in the city. Amy also attended the Rustic Chapel, as it was popularly called from its style of architecture, and ever since the beginning of their acquaintance she had been in the habit of joining the two girls, and walking part way home with them.

Now when Julia asked Brenda whether she had seen Amy the past week, Brenda felt a little uncomfortable thrill pass through her.

"No, I have n't," she replied, shortly. Indeed, if the truth were told, she had hardly thought of Amy since Agnes' home-coming.

"I have been wondering," said Julia, — "I have been wondering about the reading class. Perhaps Amy expected to hear something from us about it."

"I don't see why," responded Brenda. "We can't



have her on our minds all the time. Not that I don't like her," she added, hastily, noting Julia's look of surprise; "but of course we've had so many other things to do this week."

"Yes," said Julia, a little doubtfully; "but still — still —"

"Now, Julia, Amy is more my friend than she is yours. So you don't have to stand up for her."

Julia said no more, although she wondered why a longer acquaintance should entitle Brenda to greater liberty in neglecting Amy. It was true that the actual time since they had last met was not so very great, — little more than ten days. Yet there had been a kind of understanding that the girls should meet every two or three days — "if not oftener," Nora had said — to read together, and discuss their books.

A week had now passed without a meeting of this kind, and Julia wondered if Brenda had made an explanation to Amy. From Brenda's present tone she felt quite sure that no explanation had been made, and she felt sorry that she had not attended to it herself. Now Amy, when she saw the two cousins taking their seats in church, looked at Brenda with more or less bitterness in her thoughts. It was plain that Brenda had had no compunction about dropping her. She would have cared less had not cousin Joan and Fritz both been ready to talk to her about it. Fritz had not meant to annoy her, but in offering once or twice to go on his wheel with a message for her to the girls at Rockley, he had not pleased her. His intentions,



however, had been the best in the world, for since their reconciliation over the stranded boat he had never once teased Amy. Such goodness could not last indefinitely, but for the present Amy appreciated it.

With cousin Joan, however, it was different.

"It is just as I told you," she said, — "just as I told you. I hear that there are to be great goings-on at Rockley, — a wedding and other things. Minnie Murphy's aunt is going over there to accommodate, as a cook. Of course at such a time they won't think of you. I told you that it would n't do to set too much by those city people. They're always taken up with their own affairs. Well, 'put not your trust in princes,' — that reminds me, Amy that I wish you'd ask your mother not to have the custard quite so sweet. So much sugar don't agree with me."

"I should say not," said poor Amy to herself, as she walked downstairs to attend to little things in the kitchen. The little Murphy girl worked for Mrs. Redmond only in the morning, and the rest of the work of the house after the noon meal was shared by mother and daughter. It did not greatly soothe poor Amy's ruffled feelings to see from her window, when she looked out, the Barlow beach-wagon passing, loaded with young people in the greatest spirits. To be sure, all told, there were only half a dozen, — Julia and Brenda, Tom Hearst and Philip, who had come over for the day, and Mr. Weston and Agnes. But Amy, as she heard their laughter as they passed by, felt sadly neglected, and her expression was so sombre that



her mother, coming in with her easel, was on the point of asking her what the matter was. On second thought, she said nothing at the time. She, too, had seen the beach-wagon as she walked up the road, and she understood why Amy looked so unhappy.



## XIX

### MAINE AND MANCHESTER

TO Julia the visit to Eliza in Maine had all the charm of novelty. Her uncle and aunt had yielded to her urgent request, and she had been permitted to travel alone from Beverly. At Beverly she had taken the train on the main line, and there she had parted with Brenda, who was to take the branch road for Manchester-by-the-sea. Julia had been invited to join her on this visit to Edith, and she had promised to shorten her visit to Maine by a few days in order to have a little time at Manchester-by-the-sea before her return to Rockley and the wedding.

"I can't imagine how I am to get along without my two young relatives-to-be," said Mr. Weston, laughing, as he bade them good-bye. He had insisted on going to Beverly with them, and he had presented each of them with a large box of nougat to console her on the way.

"I shall certainly be unable," he continued, "to go on any more pilgrimages, and I shall be driven to —"

"Devote yourself to Agnes," cried Brenda, as the train came in sight.

"That's just it," responded Mr. Weston; "she won't let me. She's so wrapped up in her old friends, and so busy getting things for the wedding, that —"



"There's the train, Julia," interrupted Brenda; "don't forget to write," she added, as she said good-bye.

"No, indeed, I'll write first," replied Julia, as the train pulled up.

Now, as letters from one school-girl to another often touch on things that an older person might not think worth mentioning, two of the letters of the cousins may give the best possible idea of their visits.

"DEAR BRENDA," —  
(for it was Julia, as might have been expected, who wrote first.)

DEAR BRENDA, — I am afraid that you will think this a very stupid letter, for really nothing has happened since I came here, except the little commonplace things that happen on a farm. I miss the ocean, and I shall be very glad to see it again. Eliza is as happy as can be. She is the head of a household, and she makes the most of it. Her little nieces and nephews are made to "toe the mark," as she calls it, in a way that is truly wonderful. I have been held before them, it seems, as a model, ever since their aunt took charge of them. In consequence, it was two or three days before I could get them to say a word to me. The youngest merely stared at me every minute with her finger in her mouth, and the elder boy and girl stared, and said, "yes, ma'am," and "no, ma'am," when I spoke to them. They have gradually improved, and yesterday they asked if they might name the new calf for me. Eliza had told them that it would not be respectful unless I gave my consent, and when they found that I was willing, they were perfectly delighted. You may laugh when I tell you that I shed a few tears at poor Prince's grave. They have made a regular mound above it, and have



marked it with a tablet of wood, painted white and neatly lettered. Eliza was almost as fond of Prince as I was. Ever since I came here I have been going to bed at about half-past eight, and rising at six. That is the way in the country. Eliza's brother gets up at dawn, and breakfasts at some unheard-of hour. That's why country people look so much older than they are. They get more time into a year than most of us do. The other day I went to a sewing-circle tea-party. In some ways it was rather funny. I'll not try to tell you until I see you just what it was like. I am glad that I brought some books with me, for I have unlimited time for reading. I go out to a field that rises up back of the house, on one side of which is a little pine grove. There, in the shade, I am perfectly happy and comfortable until Eliza comes along and tries to do something for my entertainment. I am rather glad they are haying now; otherwise, I should have to drive all the time. This warm weather it is so much pleasanter to sit still and read. That reminds me of the reading class. I hope that you *did* write to Amy. I did not like to myself, for fear you would think me officious. Of course I do not know her as well as you do, but still I feel as if she might wonder what had become of us. If you have n't written to her, you will, won't you? I suppose that you are having a perfectly beautiful time at Manchester. Give my love to Edith. What fun we shall have at the wedding! To think that it is only two weeks off!

Affectionately,

JULIA.

Now if Julia had been able to go farther into details in her letter, she might have told — but no, her modesty would never have let her tell — of many things that she had been able to do for Eliza and the young nieces and



nephews. A country farmer has not much money to spare, and Julia, when she found that Eliza's namesake, the eldest of the family, was anxious to study music, was only too glad to pay for a six months' course of lessons in advance. The girl already could play a few hymn-tunes on the cabinet organ, which was the most pretentious piece of furniture in the little parlor, and she had confided to Julia that when she could perform the longer pieces in the book of instruction she should be perfectly happy. A large tool-chest, filled with an assortment of mysterious implements, found its way to the farm-house during Julia's stay there, and the boys and their father were equally pleased with it. Another box — a large one, this time — brought a collection of standard books. Julia had discovered that a great need of the little community was good books, and she had in mind the elder Eliza and her brother, and some of the heads of families in the neighborhood, when she ordered from town Sir John Lubbock's "Hundred Best Books," in the uniform and inexpensive binding into which a certain publisher had put them.

"Some of them," she said to herself, "will certainly be above the heads of most of the people here. But it's better for them to have books that they will have to climb up to, rather than books they must grovel over, like some of the novels they read."

In the village, Julia found one or two helpless old people supported half by charity and by the grudging help of distant relatives.



"Old Mrs. Tracy," said Eliza, "is in constant fear that she'll have to go to the poor-house. If her son and his wife had n't been killed in that railroad accident, she'd never have come to this, and she's such a good, pious woman, too."

So it happened that Julia, after talking it over carefully with Eliza, offered to pay the three dollars a week that would keep the old lady off the town, and compensate the cousin with whom she lived for taking care of her. Old Mr. Steiner, with his wooden leg, was another of Julia's protégés.

"If I'd a-lost that leg in the war, I'd a-had a pension; but just because I tried to stop a runaway horse, it don't seem right that I should be so helpless. I stopped the horse fast enough, and I was knocked down and dragged, so that my leg had to be amputated."

Old Mr. Steiner said "hoss" and "ampitated," but Julia had great interest in him because she knew that his bravery had saved two lives. The people whom he had rescued were too poor to do more than offer him a home, when a worthless son had made him lose his farm through a mortgage note. The three dollars a week which she guaranteed to them made old Mr. Steiner as happy as a king, and he overwhelmed her with his thanks.

"You won't have to pay it a great many years, Miss Julia," said Eliza. "They're neither of them going to hold out much longer. But you could n't have made your money go a greater ways in doing good than you have."



For it's very hard for old people to feel that they're a burden on the people they're living with."

In other ways Julia found opportunities for making herself helpful to some of the less fortunate with whom she came in contact.

She had just returned from a tea-party at the house of one of the neighbors, when Brenda's letter from Manchester was put into her hand. Eliza's brother had gone to the village during their absence, and had brought back the evening mail.

As she read the three or four sheets, written on the oblong violet paper which happened then to be the fashion, Julia smiled at the contrast between the kind of thing in which Brenda was then participating, and that of which she herself had formed part during the last week or two.

MY DEAR JULIA, — I really think that you made a mistake in not coming to Manchester with me. You could have gone up to the country just as well some other time, and really it's just the height of the season here, so you've missed a lot by staying away. Philip says that you are awfully foolish. He's been asking about you very particularly, and you know he doesn't often trouble himself about Edith's friends. I think myself that he was much nicer a few years ago. He seems so kind of conceited now. But then most of the Harvard boys are.

Well, we've been over to the Club — the Essex County — several times. The Blairs have a new pair of black horses that just spin over the ground, so that we are there in no time. To tell the truth, I'd just as soon go on my wheel, but Mrs. Blair won't let Edith ride in August; she thinks



it's bad for her head. Then she likes to drive with us. So we sit on the piazza and listen to the music. That's about all there is to do. But a good many people come around and talk to you, and I must say they're very nice, and never try to make me remember I'm only sixteen. But then, of course, Edith and I are both rather tall for our age — and her clothes, well, really, they have just as much style as if she were eighteen. Her aunt Emmeline brought her stacks of things from Paris, and I don't see why mamma didn't have Agnes bring me one of those blue crepons. It would be just as suitable for me as for Edith.

It's rather fun to watch them playing golf, although I'd rather watch than play this hot weather. Do you know, I've hardly set foot to the ground since I left home; and there's some one to wait on me whenever I want anything, so that I shall be lazier than ever when I go back to Rockley. The other day we had a cruise as far as Portsmouth on the Windermere's steam-yacht — the most perfect thing you ever saw — well, it was beyond my wildest dreams of what a yacht could be. Then we've been out on Jim Rembrandt's four-in-hand. We were the only girls of our age he asked, but then he's a kind of a cousin of Edith's, and he drove us over to his kennels at Wenham; you never saw such perfect little terriers, and hunting dogs, — well, he has a whole outfit, and I would n't dare say how many men he keeps just to look after those dogs. Some way or other, when I saw the care he gave them, and heard how much money he spends on them, I could n't help thinking of those poor little children we saw that day in Boston — you remember — begging us for flowers. But I must say that Edith is good about flowers. She sends two great hampers twice a week to the flower mission. Sometimes they are hot-house flowers, for you know Mr. Blair's conservatories here are almost as fine as those they have in Brookline.



There's been company every evening at dinner—Tom Hearst, of course, and Rupert Walsh one evening, and other friends of Philip's; and Frances Pounder has been visiting the Ormsbys, and Belle was there, too, for a few days, so that it's like a dinner-party every evening. Edith wants to have something special for me before I go, probably just an informal evening at home with a little dancing—a very little, I fancy, for the boys hate to dance in summer.

Of course you'll be shocked to hear that I've hardly read a thing since I came here. You see, Edith and I have so much to talk about. Besides, although she's rather serious, she is n't as fond of reading as you are. I miss your influence, and Amy's. That reminds me, I haven't written to Amy yet, but I'm going to ask her to assist at the wedding; Agnes says the more young girls there are the better she'll like it. Don't you feel excited when you think of being a bridesmaid? I'm sure I do. You know you're to meet me in Boston on the 25th to try the dresses, and mamma says we'd better stay in town over night. She and Agnes will be there, so I think that would be a good time to go out to Shiloh, just as we planned. Edith sends love, and so would Philip, if he knew I was writing.

So good-bye (honestly, I should think you'd find it very stupid in the country).

Affectionately,

BRENDA.

Julia smiled a little as she read this characteristic letter, and she saw that her cousin was really enjoying her visit. Yet the description of the gayety did not make her discontented with the life that she herself had been leading during her fortnight in Maine.

"It's rather comical, too, that Brenda has forgotten



that I am to spend two or three days at Manchester on my way home. I'll drop a line to Edith not to refresh her memory, and when I arrive she'll be taken by surprise."

Accordingly, when Julia presented herself at Mrs. Blair's dinner-table a few days after this, Brenda really was very much surprised.

"How in the world did you get over from the station? Edith and I could have met you, for we were out driving." Then, noting a smile on Philip's face, "Oh, I suppose Philip went over. Well, I dare say that that was pleasanter, still you might have let me know."

"Why, you silly girl," cried Edith, "how forgetful you are! It was all arranged before you left Rockley. Julia promised to give me two or three days on her way back from Maine."

"Oh, I remember we talked of it. But I thought that she would n't tear herself away from Eliza until the last minute."

"I told her that she must go with us on that excursion to-morrow, and here she is," and Edith threw her arm affectionately around Julia's waist.

The next morning, by an early train, Ralph Weston arrived.

"When I heard that it was to be a pilgrimage I dropped everything and just came," he said. "You see, I must know all that I can about this wonderful North Shore," he said. "I'm going to be a tremendous patriot when I return to Paris, and I can't afford to neglect any oppor-



tunity for informing myself about historic places. It's Norman's Woe we're to see to-day, is n't it?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"Well, now can you tell me what Norman's Woe is distinguished for?"

"Why, Longfellow wrote a poem about it. Don't you remember?"

"'Blue were her eyes as the fairy flax.'

Surely you remember how the Skipper and his daughter drifted on

"'fast through the midnight dark and drear,  
Through the whistling sleet and snow,  
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept  
Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe.'"

"Don't recite in that tragic tone; we don't wish to be too sad to-day. You'll have to be as cheerful as possible, so that I may have something pleasant to remember when I go back to Europe," said the irrepressible Mr. Weston. "You should retain pleasant memories, too, of your last pilgrimage, for I don't suppose that you'll have the heart for anything more of the kind when I am no longer with you."

"Don't be too sure of that," replied Brenda; "we're just getting into the proper mood for such expeditions."

"All ready," cried Edith, coming around the corner of the house on the front seat of the beach-wagon.

"Yes, here we are," and "here we are," — and from various nooks and corners appeared Julia and Evelyn Romney, one of Edith's friends, and Tom and Philip, and



Mrs. Pell, who promised Mrs. Blair that she would look after the young people, and who afterwards admitted that the task had been much more difficult than she had expected.

But after all, one excursion of this kind is much like another, and the amount of sight-seeing of this party of friends did not tire those who had no interest in historic places, and yet it was enough to make the day much more interesting to thoughtful people like Julia and Mr. Weston, who cared for something more than the excitement of a day's outing. So, after the short drive from Magnolia, the two latter hastened over the rocks to gaze into the depths of Rafe's Chasm, and to look out toward the treacherous sea, —

“ where the white and fleecy waves,  
Looked soft as carded wool,”

as soft as when

“ the cruel rocks, they gored her side,  
Like the horns of an angry bull.”

On their way to the little old-fashioned inn in Essex where they were to have luncheon, Julia and Mr. Weston exclaimed many times over the beautiful woods, that seemed to belong rather to a mountain region than to one close to the sea, — wild stretches of woodland so markedly in contrast with the broad, smooth roads, and the great country houses and finely kept lawns which they were constantly passing.

They were a gay and merry party, and this picnic of Edith's (for so they called it, although their luncheon was



served to them at the old inn) — this picnic of Edith's was one of the pleasantest excursions of the summer for Brenda and Julia.

"I am to see your mother and Agnes in the city to-morrow," said Mr. Weston, as he bade Brenda good-bye. "I believe that you are to meet them there the day after. I may tell them, I suppose, that you are coming. As for myself, I have to go on to New York for a day or two, but I'll be back —"

"Yes, do come back in time for the wedding," interposed Brenda, mischievously.

"Oh, very well, if you are sure that I am expected."

"Oh, I don't suppose that they could get along without you," rejoined Brenda.

"Well, then, I won't forget it," and swinging himself up to the seat of the carriage, the young man raised his hat politely, as he drove away.



## XX

### THE ROSAS AGAIN

IN their travelling suits, with only their hand-bags, the two cousins journeyed from Manchester to Boston. Their trunks had gone on to Rockley; but, to save time, they had decided to travel directly to the city.

How strangely still and deserted seemed the streets of the Back Bay! As the cab drove toward Mr. Barlow's house, hardly a person was to be seen, except the policeman on his beat, and here and there a stray individual of the tourist type.

The sun poured down on the hot asphalt of Beacon Street, and the air was oppressive.

"How awful the city is in the summer!" said Brenda. "I don't wonder that no one stays here."

"I fancy that there are a few hundred people in town in spite of the heat."

"Oh, Julia, you are so practical! Certainly nobody one knows stays here."

"There's Agnes at the window," cried Julia, without heeding the implied reproach in the tone, and in a second later Agnes had opened the front door for them.

"I'm to go with you to the dressmaker's," she said, "and there may be a few errands for us to do in the shops. You must make out a list, Brenda, so that you



can get all your shopping done to-day. Mamma does n't wish you to spend two nights in town."

"Very well," responded Brenda; "we have n't so very much to do, have we? We wish to get all through to-day, because we have another plan for to-morrow morning, if mamma will let us carry it out."

When Brenda disclosed her intention of going to Shiloh to see the Rosas (I am afraid that she brought the matter up as if she had settled in her own mind that she was to go), she found her mother at first disinclined to give the desired permission. But on Julia's assuring her that it was very easy to reach the Rosas' house from the station, Mrs. Barlow gave her consent. The prospect of this little journey buoyed Brenda up during the long hour while she stood in Madame Manteau's fitting-room, having this "effec," as Madame Manteau phrased it, and that "effec" tried, so that the two bridesmaids, as far as the clever dressmaker could bring it about, should be above reproach.

"I'll tell you, Julia," said Brenda, "when Agnes comes back we must get her to go into one or two shops. I want to buy a few little things for the Rosas, and then I am going to get some of my prints at the photographers; I've had duplicates made of those Fourth of July pictures, and I might as well get them as have them sent by mail. Now, Julia, it's your turn; I can't sit down on account of pins and things, but I must keep this on until Agnes comes back. I hope that this short drapery will suit you, for the two gowns ought to be just alike, and I must have mine just like this."



So Brenda rattled on, while the finishing touches, as far as the fitting was concerned, were given to the two white crepe gowns. Then, with Agnes's help, all the shopping was accomplished, even to the little things that the girls wished to take to Shiloh. At last, tired with their day's work, they returned to the large house, which seemed so unnatural with carpets rolled up, furniture shrouded in white linen, and ornaments put out of sight.

"As if the family was getting ready for a funeral instead of a wedding," whispered Brenda.

"Be careful!" cried Julia; "it might worry Agnes even to hear such a suggestion."

"Julia," said Brenda, the next morning, as the train rolled toward Shiloh, "in one way I feel very uncomfortable when I think of seeing Mrs. Rosa. I suppose you think that I never worry about that money, because I never speak about it; but really I do."

"Why, you silly girl," cried Julia, "why should you worry? — the thing is all settled."

"There, Julia," responded Brenda, "you are really rather unkind. How can you call the thing settled! That two hundred dollars is gone, and —"

"But you know, Brenda, that Mrs. Rosa is no worse off."

"I know it, Julia; in one way, she is n't, for you certainly behaved like an angel; but you forget the rule that papa made. I am to have only one-third of my allowance until the two hundred dollars is made up. It will take ages — perfect ages."



"Uncle Robert need not have made that rule on my account," responded Julia, gravely. "I do not wish the money returned that I gave to make up the loss."

"I know it, Julia; but papa has some theory about abstract justice, and about making me more careful in the future. He does n't wish me to feel that I have escaped without any punishment."

"You poor thing!" said Julia.

"Well, I have n't said much about it this summer because I did n't wish any one to pity me. But I've hardly had a penny to spend. Have n't you noticed?"

"You could always borrow from me," said Julia, smiling.

"Well, I have n't wanted to borrow. Of course I've been able to get along. But I just hope that sometime I'll come across that Portuguese man. I'm going to ask Mrs. Rosa his name to-day. If ever I do, how I shall enjoy calling a policeman."

"Would you know how to call a policeman?" asked Julia. "I'm sure I should n't have the least idea myself."

"Well, I only hope that I may have the chance sometime," and Brenda shook her pretty head vindictively.

The money to which she referred with so much feeling was two-thirds of the proceeds from a bazaar which had been held at Edith's house the preceding spring. "The Four," as Edith, Nora, Brenda, and Belle were then called, had been the chief workers. But toward the last Julia had been permitted to assist, as well as her friend Ruth Roberts. Of course on the day of the Bazaar many other



girls from Miss Crawdon's school had been called upon to help in various ways. In the end the Bazaar had been a great success, and after all expenses were paid, three hundred dollars remained for the beneficiaries. But, alas! the money was put in the hands of Brenda for safe-keeping, and the temptation to show her independence proved too strong. Without the knowledge of the others, who were equally interested, she took two hundred dollars of the money to the North End to show to Mrs. Rosa, the poor Portuguese woman, for whom they hoped to expend the money. The plan was to remove Mrs. Rosa and her family to Shiloh, a country town, where people in the first stages of consumption were often greatly helped, or even cured. The money raised at the Bazaar was to establish the family in a home of their own, and the change was expected to benefit the children as much as the mother.

When Mrs. Rosa saw the two hundred-dollar bills she begged Brenda to let her keep it in the house over night, and Brenda had weakly consented. Soon after her departure from Mrs. Rosa's, a young man of Mrs. Rosa's nationality had appeared, who claimed the payment of a large debt which he said Mrs. Rosa had owed his mother. On this pretext he had taken the two hundred dollars from the sick woman, and had then gone away from Boston. The report was that he had gone to South America.

Brenda, of course, was very much blamed both by her own family and by all the girls who had interested themselves in the Bazaar. Poor Mrs. Rosa, indeed, might have suffered had not Julia come forward with an offer to



make good the loss of the money, and thus Mrs. Rosa's removal to Shiloh had been accomplished in spite of Brenda's foolish act.

But Mr. Barlow, realizing that Brenda ought to be made to feel the effects of her folly, had taken the way which she had described to Julia, and her allowance had been cut down to one-third of the usual amount. Brenda had had too much pride to refer to this fact during the summer, and as her wants were always well supplied by indulgent parents, it is hardly likely that she really suffered. Nevertheless, she had had to economize in some of her pet extravagances, and this to a girl of Brenda's disposition meant a great deal. Deep down in her heart, therefore, she cherished a feeling of undying vindictiveness toward the man whom she considered the cause of all her mortification and inconvenience. She forgot — as we are all apt to — her own thoughtlessness had first of all been the cause of her misfortunes.

In front of the neat little cottage where Julia and Brenda and the others had established Mrs. Rosa in the spring, the two cousins ordered the driver of the depot wagon to stop that August morning. At the sound of wheels, a head pushed itself out of the half-open door, then it withdrew, and in a few seconds another head appeared. Then this, too, withdrew; but just as the carriage came to a full stop, the door was pushed wide open, and a small whirlwind flew toward the girls. It was Manuel, there was no doubt of that, in real clothes, — that is, in jacket and trousers, — with his hair cropped close, and



a broad grin on his sunburned face. He was speechless at sight of his old friends, but he clasped Brenda around the knees, so vigorously that if she had tried she could n't have moved a step. Behind Manuel rushed Angelina, with a red ribbon tied around her neck. She had evidently waited a minute to add this adornment to her costume.

"Why, Miss Barlow, and Miss Bourne, who would ever have expected to see you? Dear me, mother will be so surprised! There, she's coming, too! Did you come all the way from the beach to-day? Mother, mother!" turning toward the house, "here's Miss Barlow and Miss Bourne."

But Mrs. Rosa had already reached the group, and Julia and Brenda looked at her in astonishment. There was no doubt that Shiloh had agreed with her. She stood more erect, her color was better, and her general appearance was neater than when they had last seen her. She had lost her former hopeless and unambitious expression.

"Awful glad," she said, in her somewhat uncertain English, — "awful glad to see you. Come right in. Please 'scuse us," she added, as the girls followed her, — "please 'scuse us if we ain't all fixed up. We works in the garden every morning."

"Why, I'm sure that you look as neat as you need," said Julia, as they seated themselves in the little room that was at once parlor and dining-room. Probably if she had looked closely at the floor she might have seen that a broom could have been used on it with advantage, and if she had glanced around the kitchen, of which she could



see only a little through the half-open door, she might have discovered that the breakfast dishes were still standing unwashed on the sink. But who could expect a North End family to overcome North End habits of long standing all in the space of two or three months? What a contrast this home was to the Rosas' former ill-ventilated abode! Here the sunlight was pouring in, the windows were wide open, and a canary bird in a cage in the kitchen sang so loudly as almost to drown conversation.

"I have a bed all of my own," said Manuel, pointing to a bedroom in which a small cot stood near the larger bed, — Mrs. Rosa's larger bed. In fitting up the house, the girls had made an effort to have a separate bed for each member of the family, whereas in the city two beds had been made to do duty for the seven.

Angelina, as Julia carried on a conversation with Mrs. Rosa, was expressing unbounded admiration for everything worn by Brenda, — her hat with its masses of flowers, her pongee parasol lined with pink, the chate-laine on which she carried a number of useless silver things, — she even ventured to finger the sleeve of the soft silk shirt-waist with an expression of approval.

"Come off!" cried Mrs. Rosa, in a tone of reproach. "Eet ees not nice to touch the lady that way. How many times I tell you, Angelina, to be polite!"

Angelina shook her head impatiently, and sat down, holding Brenda's parasol across her knee.

"Where's John?" asked Julia, trying to divert the conversation from Angelina.



"Oh, he 's beesy now. He 'n a great help to me."

"Yes," explained Angelina, "he 's earning two dollars a week, running errands for Mr. Smith. They give him a great many things, too; they say he 's so obliging."

Angelina never hesitated to express her approval for her younger brother. Apparently she had no jealousy, although his good qualities were in shining contrast with her own.

"But I thought that you were working, too; don't you go to the boarding-house regularly?"

"Well, almost regularly," said Angelina; "but I did n't feel just like it to-day. I got a scolding yesterday for breaking some plates, and I just thought I 'd show them to-day that I would n't put up with it."

"But that is n't the way to treat people who have hired you. It may be that they won't take you back."

"That 's what I say," and Mrs. Rosa shrugged her shoulders, as if Angelina were altogether beyond her control.

Just at this moment the two younger girls, and the boy who was next in age to Manuel, appeared. They had been blackberrying, and their pails showed that they had been successful.

The three youngsters, freckled and happy, stood before Brenda and Julia too much overwhelmed by the sight of visitors to say a word for themselves. Angelina had taken their tin pails from them, and busied herself in the kitchen, while Brenda amused herself with the children. Julia took advantage of this lull in general conversation to



question Mrs. Rosa about various things, following, indeed, certain suggestions that Miss South had made; and she was very glad to find from Mrs. Rosa's answers that the change had really been to the great advantage of the whole family, and that Angelina was the only one who longed for the city.

"When winter comes, it will be harder for you all," she said to Mrs. Rosa; "but we will see that you have plenty of fuel for your fire, and if you have enough to eat, and can keep warm, why, it seems to me, that you ought to be contented."

"Oh, yes, indeed, Miss," replied Mrs. Rosa, — who could understand English rather better than she could speak it, — "Oh, yes, Miss; and if Angelina don't like it I'll just whip her."

"Oh, no, she's too old to be whipped —"

"There, Julia," cried Brenda, "we have n't opened that box; we left it out on the steps."

Running to the door, Brenda found Manuel keeping guard over the box. When Brenda asked for it, he lifted it in his arms — and although it was not a large box, it made a good armful for him — and carried it to a table in the house. Brenda left the children to exclaim over the various little gifts that she had brought, and with some impatience she tore open the envelope of photographs that she had brought from town.

"There, Mrs. Rosa, I want you to see these pictures of Rockley, and other places on the shore. I took them myself, and sometime I'm going to make some pic-



tures of you here at Shiloh; I have a camera. You understand?"

"Oh, yes, Miss; you make them yourself. Oh, my, how pretty!" and Mrs. Rosa took up one after another of the prints.

"I'll give you some," said Brenda, "to remember me by."

"Oh, yes," and Mrs. Rosa smiled too.

Then one of the photographs fell from her hand. "You make these all?" she asked, excitedly.

"Why, yes."

"Who's this? where you make him?" and she held up one of the photographs that had been taken near Tucker's landing on the Fourth.

"Why, at Marblehead, way down by the sea," replied Brenda. "That's a foreign man, too, but not like you; he's an Italian," she added.

"No Italian," responded Mrs. Rosa. "Why, that's Miguel Silva, that bad, bad man!" and she threw the photograph on the floor and stamped on it.

At the name "Miguel Silva" Julia had looked up in surprise.

"Why, what is it? Have you heard from Miguel Silva?"

"No, no, he's there," and Mrs. Rosa pointed to the despised photograph. As Julia stooped to pick it up Mrs. Rosa threw a second photograph on the floor. She had torn it in four pieces; and as Julia picked them up, she saw the face of the foreigner who had saved Brenda



from a bicycle accident. While she had n't seen the affair herself, she had been much interested in the story, as Nora and Brenda had told it to her, and she had thought it a wonderful coincidence that the man who had acted so promptly should have been the same man whom Brenda had photographed on the Fourth.

But here, apparently, was an even more wonderful coincidence. At least, it would be wonderful, if Mrs. Rosa should prove to be right; if "Brenda's foreigner," as they had called him in fun, should prove to be the man who had taken Mrs. Rosa's money a few months before. Miguel Silva had certainly been the name of this man, and there was no doubt that Mrs. Rosa thought that she recognized Brenda's photograph as a portrait of him.

Brenda herself was puzzled by Mrs. Rosa's words, and half angry that her pictures should have been treated with disrespect.

"Angelina, Angelina, come here!" cried Mrs. Rosa; and at her mother's summons Angelina appeared. She carried before her a little tray, on which were two saucers of blackberries and a plate of biscuit. But she set the tray down quickly, and ran over to her mother to look at the photograph which Mrs. Rosa had taken from Julia's hand.

"Why, it's Miguel Silva!" she exclaimed, angrily, — "the bad man. Where did you get it?"

Brenda now began to make explanations, and though Mrs. Rosa may not have understood her perfectly, Angelina comprehended that within a comparatively short time



Miguel Silva had been seen on the North Shore, whereas he had been thought to have run away to South America.

"Why, he says that he lives at Salem. That's where his little boy died," said Brenda.

"His little boy dead?" asked Angelina. "Oh, mother, you hear that; little Miguel's dead. Miss Barlow says so."

"Oh, the poor little thing!" exclaimed Mrs. Rosa. "He was a nice little boy, though I never saw him since he was a baby. Poor Maria!" and for a moment her hatred of Miguel seemed to be lost in pity for his wife, who, she said, loved the little boy so much.

The disclosure brought about by the photographs overshadowed all other subjects of conversation between the two cousins and the Rosa family. They looked, to be sure, at the garden, and praised the work which each of the children had done. They ate the blackberries and biscuit which Angelina had so thoughtfully prepared for them. But Mrs. Rosa could talk of nothing except Miguel Silva, and Brenda promised to see if something could not be done to make him give up the money; and Angelina made many suggestions, even to the extent of going to Salem to testify against Miguel.

"I think that she'd like to be in a lawsuit," whispered Julia to Brenda. "I don't believe she'd care whether she was witness or prisoner, as long as she could be a centre of observation."

"We'll surely let you know if anything can be done," said Julia to Mrs. Rosa, as they said good-bye. "But I



really think that to try to punish Miguel would be more trouble than it would be worth."

"I cannot say that I agree with you," said Brenda, after they had left the Rosas. "If that man is Miguel Silva, I think that he ought to be punished. He had n't a bit of right to that money; you know papa looked into the account and found that it was hardly twenty-five dollars, and the man had trumped up all the rest of it. If that isn't stealing, I don't see what would be. But still — dear me — I can't bear to think that that interesting man is the one. Perhaps Mrs. Rosa is wrong about him."

"You know his name now; shall you take the photographs to him at Salem?" asked Julia, mischievously.



## XXI

### A WEDDING GARMENT

Now, during the fortnight or more in which Amy had heard not a word from Brenda, she had tried to possess her soul in patience. Although a little inclined to be cast down by trifles, she still had a strong sense of dignity, and she knew that it would be very foolish to repine at the loss of a friend who had grown indifferent to her. Yet while trying to appear philosophic when anything was said in her presence about Rockley, or the approaching wedding, her heart was still pretty sore. Fritz, by his behavior during this week or two regained all that he had previously lost in her opinion. He refrained from teasing her, and he never once made a slighting remark about Brenda, as had grown to be his custom during the days when her intimacy with Amy was at its height.

There may be some persons who in reading this may think it strange that Amy — or any one else — should attach importance to the fact that for a fortnight, or perhaps three weeks, one friend had neglected another friend. But persons who reason in this way have not witnessed the progress of a sudden intimacy between two very young girls. One of them, when a sudden fancy springs up, may attach more importance to it than to anything else which has come into her life. If she does not



see her friend daily, she at least expects a letter, and a week's silence is something absolutely inexplicable and hardly to be forgiven. Now the friendship of Amy and Brenda had at first been of this intense type, and of the two Brenda had seemed the more devoted. But to this friendship one might apply the old fable of the moon and the brooks, apply it at least in a way somewhat different from the way in which it is usually applied. For while Brenda, like the moon, had many things to occupy her attention; Amy, like one of the many brooks that admired the moon, had no other person within her vision quite so dazzling as Brenda. Amy, to be sure, in admiring Brenda, had not found her absolutely faultless; indeed, as she thought of her, it seemed as if it was on account of her faults that she had liked the bright, almost dashing girl, so unlike any one she had ever known.

When Brenda's failure to visit her was explained by the news (picked up in some way by Fritz) that she was away, Amy naturally enough looked for a letter. But when, after a reasonable time, it did not come, she tried to put Brenda out of her mind. If she was not wholly successful in this, she at least did not mention her name, and she found a little consolation in writing sad verses.

At last one afternoon, as they sat in their favorite place by the rocks, Fritz could stand it no longer.

"You must be pretty desperate," he cried. He had been watching Amy for half an hour out of the corner of his eyes, although ostensibly engaged in skipping stones in the water, which happened then to be unusually calm.



"Oh, Fritz, how absurd! What do you mean?" In her heart Amy had a fair idea of Fritz's meaning.

"Come, now, Amy, I know that I have teased you, and I dare say that you think that I am glad that those girls have acted like that; they have certainly been kind of mean. But really I do feel sorry, and I just hope that you 'll have a chance to pay them back."

"No," she said, without any bitterness, "I don't really feel that way; but of course it's disappointing. That's why I never wished to know those city people before. I always felt that they could not be entirely depended on. Their way of living is very different from mine. They have so many friends, and they can travel and do anything almost whenever they want to. But then, Brenda seemed more anxious for my acquaintance than I for hers, and she is so bright and amusing that I grew very fond of her." Amy spoke in the past tense, as if her acquaintance with Brenda was entirely a thing of the past, and as if she had little hope of resuming it. Yet it was hardly three weeks since they had all been together, — Amy, Nora and Brenda and Julia, — and in view of the various exciting events of the interval, it was perhaps not strange that Brenda had not written to her. Now it happened that the afternoon of this conversation of Fritz and Amy, happened to be the very day on which Julia and Brenda were to go to the city, and it happened that that evening, as Julia sat with her aunt, talking of various things connected with the wedding, she asked her if she as yet had thought of inviting Amy to the festivities.



"I am glad that you spoke of it, Julia," said Mrs. Barlow; "you always are so thoughtful. I had meant before this to call on Mrs. Redmond the day before I went to New York to meet Agnes. There was no one at home but a little Irish maid, and I left my card. I was out when Mrs. Redmond returned my call, and thus we have never met. But I am sure that the mother of a bright girl like Amy must be an interesting woman. I have been meaning to give Amy an informal invitation to come to Rockley the day of the wedding. She will enjoy herself, I am sure, with the other young people, and it will please Brenda. Oh, Brenda!" — for the latter had just entered the room.

"I hope that you have told Amy about the wedding, so that she won't be entirely taken by surprise. I am going to send her an informal invitation to come over on the day of the wedding. I shall write this evening."

"To tell you the truth," said Brenda, shamefacedly, "I have n't written to her since I left Rockley. You see, there was so much going on, with the engagement, and the excursions with Ralph, and everything."

"Well, well, Brenda, I should have expected something very different from you. At least, I had hoped that you had overcome this carelessness. Amy must think it very singular not to have had a word from you, especially if she has heard rumors of the wedding."

"Oh, mamma, don't look so cross! I'll go to see her the minute I get home, I really will."

"Nevertheless I will write to her myself to-night. She



might like a few days' warning, if she is to come to the wedding."

"Shall you ask her mother, too?"

"Why, yes, to the church, Brenda. But she knows us so slightly that she would hardly care to come to the house, even if we should ask her. In my note to Amy I will make it plain that only intimate friends are invited to the house, and a few young girls who are your especial friends."

When Amy received Mrs. Barlow's note the next day she was thrown into a state of great excitement.

"There," said Mrs. Redmond, when she showed it to her, "you see that you were not altogether forgotten. Mrs. Barlow says, I see, that Brenda is coming to see you as soon as she returns. I hope that you will be a little more cheerful than you have been lately."

"Oh, yes, — oh, yes, indeed," replied Amy; "but do you think I can go to the wedding? What can I wear?"

Mrs. Redmond looked serious for a moment. "That is a question rather hard to answer. We have so little time for preparation, and you are so nearly grown-up now, Amy, that I should not care to have you go among strangers unless — Well, we'll see. You know this summer we have very little to spend, and it does not seem as if it ought to be spent for a dress that you might wear only once or twice before it was outgrown."

"I know it, mamma; but still —" There was a decided shadow on Amy's brow.

"But still," continued her mother, smiling, "I think



that there will be some way by which you can go to the wedding. Only I will admit that I am puzzled."

"What's this about the wedding?" asked cousin Joan fretfully that afternoon. "Have they given you an invitation after all?"

"Oh, yes; we have a regular engraved invitation to the wedding itself, and Mrs. Barlow has written a note inviting me to the wedding breakfast. There are going to be a lot of young people, and it will be great fun — if I can go," she said, a little under her breath.

"Humph!" said cousin Joan, "I didn't suppose they'd take as much trouble as that for you. A note from Mrs. Barlow did you say?"

"Yes," answered Amy; "I'll show it to you if you wish," and she handed the little square envelope to cousin Joan.

Although her expression did not brighten up perceptibly, the old lady showed that she was rather pleased by the attention that had been offered Amy.

"What'll you wear?" she asked, with more interest than she usually showed in Amy's affairs.

"That's just it, cousin Joan. If a pretty dress can't be managed without too much trouble and expense, why, perhaps I'll have to give it up, although of course I don't want to do that."

"Yes, to be sure," said cousin Joan, so absent-mindedly that Amy desisted from further conversation. She moved around the room as noiselessly as usual, doing various little things for the invalid's comfort; and after a time



she went down to the little kitchen to get tea ready. When she returned with the tray, cousin Joan looked much more cheerful than was her wont at this time of day.

"After you've had your tea, Amy," she said, "I wish that you'd ask your mother to open that trunk of mine that she sent to the store-room. There's a green paste-board box, — a large one, — just under the tray, and I wish that she'd bring it to me. Here's the key."

When Mrs. Redmond and Amy went in to cousin Joan's room with the green box, the old woman seemed rather excited. "Let me see it!" she said, putting out her hands rather eagerly, and trying to untie the pink tape which held the cover securely.

Mrs. Redmond helped the old woman, for her trembling hands did not seem equal to the task.

When the cover was removed, she turned back a layer of some tissue paper that was near the top, and there, beneath it, lay some white material.

"Lift it out," she said; "lift it out, Amy, I want you to see it!"

"Certainly," responded Amy, lifting the soft web over her carefully with both hands, and taking it to the old lady.

"There!" exclaimed cousin Joan, pulling a string which held the folds in place; "it looks all right, does n't it?"

Before them rippled a mass of creamy white material, transparent, like muslin, yet silkier.

"How lovely!" cried Amy. "What is it, cousin Joan?"



"Why, it's pineapple silk. My brother brought it from India years and years ago; but it was n't fit for me to wear, or at least I was n't fit for it, so I just put it away, and now, well — Amy, I should think it would be just the thing for you to wear over to the wedding; it would n't need so very much trimming, and it could be made up real easily. I've been thinking about it since I lay here, and I don't see why it should n't be made just to suit you."

Amy was speechless at this thoughtfulness on the part of cousin Joan, and she did n't know exactly what to say, or, rather, she did not try to say anything. Mrs. Redmond was the first to speak.

"Well, cousin Joan, this is certainly very generous in you. But I'm not quite sure that we ought to accept it. It's a rather expensive material for a little girl to wear, and I have never —"

"Now, mamma, don't spoil it all, when I want it so much."

"Why, Amy, I am surprised at you!" and there was a note of reproof in Mrs. Redmond's voice.

"Oh, mamma, I did n't mean to speak in that way; but I — but you will let me have the dress, won't you?"

Even cousin Joan smiled at the eagerness in Amy's tone.

"Why, since you want it so much, what can I say? But you have n't thanked cousin Joan."

Whereupon, "Oh, cousin Joan, how careless I am! Thank you ever so much! You see, I was so overpowered at first. It is such beautiful material. Now, mamma, do



say that I can have it. You can see, cousin Joan, how pleased I am with it."

"There is n't much doubt of that," said the old woman, almost smiling at Amy's impetuosity. "I'm pretty sure that your mother will let you wear it. There, you'd better keep it yourself now, and lock up the trunk."

"Yes, 'm," and Amy, in turn, laid the transparent white stuff in her mother's lap, and ran off to fasten up the trunk.

"There," said her mother, as she returned to the room, "I have been talking it over with cousin Joan, and we agree that it would be a great pity for you not to go to the wedding. I can have Miss Storm for a day, and if we both work, we can finish the dress. It must be made very simply, and I have some thread lace to trim the waist that will give it just the proper finish, and you have taken such good care of your white sash that it will be quite fit to wear with it."

"You must take notice of everything at the wedding," said cousin Joan; "I have n't been at one myself for years and years, and there'll probably be some very fine things at it. I like to hear about pretty dresses sometimes," and poor cousin Joan turned over a little wearily in her chair.

"Take the dress to my room," said Mrs. Redmond, "and I will help cousin Joan get to bed."

When Brenda called on Amy the next day, she was full of apologies for her apparent neglect.

"I know that you'll think me a perfect wretch, but I



did n't exactly forget you. Only there were so many things that seemed to happen all at once, and every day I meant to write to you, or to see you, — I really did."

Brenda was inclined to put the case very strongly, because she knew that she was more than a little in the wrong. It was n't just the thing to "make everything," as the girls said, of a friend, and then drop her suddenly. At fifteen, a week in length is like a month to one who is older, and Amy had really felt very forlorn. In consequence, while she accepted Brenda's apologies, in her manner there was just enough dignity to make Brenda feel a little uncomfortable.

After the first explanations were over, however, both girls were soon deep in all the details of the wedding. Brenda described her dress and Julia's — they were to be the only bridesmaids — so vividly that Amy could picture them as they should look on that eventful day, from the wreath of white roses that they were to wear to the tips of their bronze shoes. A day or two earlier Amy might have listened with less interest to this glowing description; but now, as she thought of the pineapple silk, she knew that she was pretty sure herself to be one of the gay party. With this expectation, she could naturally take more interest in Brenda's lively narration.

"You see," said Brenda, "Agnes wishes me to have as jolly a time as possible out of it, and so I am to have all the girls, Frances and Edith and Belle — you've never met Frances or Belle, and Nora, of course. It's too bad that Ruth Roberts can't be here, — she's a great friend of



Julia's; but they 've gone out West, her mother and she, and they won't be back until the end of September."

"She must be very sorry to miss it."

"Oh, yes, indeed; but we'll have a large party, and we can have a fine time. I'm sending special invitations to about twenty girls whom I know very well, who are here along the Shore. I'm awfully glad that you are to be one of us; we don't have a wedding in the family every year, and so we are to make the most of this."

So Brenda rattled on, and Amy, listening, had only one regret, — she wished that Fritz might have been among the guests, and she felt as if she ought not to take so much pleasure in the prospect, when she and her friend were likely to be thus separated; it would have meant so much to Fritz to have been included in the festivities. But it was natural, she thought, that neither Mrs. Barlow nor Brenda should have invited him. Old Mr. Tomkins, his uncle, led so retired a life, that he was never thought of in the social affairs of his neighbors.

"After all," said Amy to her mother, "a house without a woman is rather stupid. I don't wonder that Fritz is always trying to get away."



## XXII

### PRESENTS AND PREPARATIONS

THE opening of the boxes containing the wedding presents for Agnes had given Brenda almost ceaseless occupation for the day or two immediately before the wedding, and indeed, from their first arrival, she had taken the boxes in charge, arranging the pretty things on tables and shelves in a sitting-room that was set aside for the purpose.

“Really, Brenda, I wish that you would let Julia take charge of this,” said Agnes, mildly. “You know that you are not the most careful girl in the world, and I’m afraid that you’ll get the cards mixed up in some way.” But Brenda had looked so grieved at the imputation that she could make a mistake in so important a matter, that Agnes had not the heart to say more. Brenda was the youngest, and the pet, and Agnes had a tender feeling as she remembered that she herself was so soon to go away, for an indefinite absence from Brenda and the rest of the family. Once or twice Brenda’s errors had been discovered through the thoughtfulness of friends who had sent a note by mail indicating the nature of their gifts. Thus old Mrs. Brown’s card, which Brenda had laid at the foot of a pair of frivolous candlesticks, was restored to its rightful place in a box of heavy silver spoons, while Miss Amsterdam’s card took its position beside the gilded candlesticks.



"It's funny," said Ralph Weston, "that a man should have sent you a box of embroidered doilies; they seem more like a woman's present," and he scanned the card which bore the name of one of his bachelor friends, Mr. Henry Filbert. Brenda happened to be in the room when Ralph said this, and she colored a little at his words. He glanced at her rather mischievously, as he held the card in his hands, and then, as she came over to the table, and looked at the gifts which had most recently arrived, she suddenly remembered.

"There, those doilies are from cousin Arabella, and Mr. Filbert's card goes with this book. The boxes they came in were about the same size."

"Ah," said Mr. Weston, taking in his hands the beautiful edition of the "Complete Angler," "this is something like. I am glad that somebody thinks of the groom on these solemn occasions. Filbert knows my weakness for old Walton, and although the box may have been directed to Agnes, I shall claim it for my own. I much prefer it to the doilies."

Now, although none of Brenda's mistakes were, perhaps, very serious, there were enough of them to keep the family in a state of mild excitement, and if Mrs. Barlow had had her way, she would have forbidden her younger daughter to have anything to do with any of the preparations for the wedding. But Agnes's wedding would indeed have been altogether extraordinary, if all preparations for it had proceeded with perfect smoothness. At the last moment, barely in time to rectify the mistake, she found that some



of her intimate friends had not received their invitations. Her shoemaker did not send home her slippers in time, so that at last she had to wear a pair that did not match her gown. But the wedding itself!—well there was nothing in any way to interfere with its completeness.

The groom and a party of friends came down from the city on an early train. They were to stay at the house of a friend of Mr. Barlow's until the hour for the ceremony, which was to be precisely at twelve o'clock.

Several of the bride's relatives were staying at her home, at Rockley, greatly to Brenda's delight. She always rejoiced in a houseful of company, and one or two of these cousins—although they were only second cousins—were girls near her own age, and she and Julia had had great fun with them the day or two before. Philip and Tom, too, and Will Hardon had been over to call the evening before, and had tried to induce Brenda to join in one or two plans to discomfit the bride at the last moment. Brenda, indeed, might have been willing to yield to some of the suggestions, had not Julia rather persuaded her that such things were likely to prove more annoying than funny.

"Well, perhaps we won't tie the white ribbons to the trunks, but there are other things; you know they can't expect to get off without anything, and Ralph has been ready enough to tease us. Why, I never knew any one so fond of teasing; although for the first few days he was so very respectful to me!" said Brenda.

"He's very good fun though," said Philip, who had seen Mr. Weston several times at Marblehead, "and I have



really taken a great fancy to him. He isn't half bad."

"Dear me!" cried Brenda, "what flattery for my brother-in-law-to-be. I must tell Agnes. It will quite turn her head."

"Oh, there now!" remonstrated Philip, "you mustn't take up every word I say. You know what I mean."

"Yes, of course she does," interposed Julia, "I wish that Ruth were near enough to be here to-morrow. There'll be quite a gathering of the clans."

"I know some one else who would second your wish," said Tom Hearst, gazing mischievously at Will, who reddened at the words, after a habit which he detested in himself. It seemed to him so foolish that a young man of his age should blush.

"Oh, yes," said Brenda, "Ruth was n't so bad after one got to know her."

At these extraordinary words, Will started as if he would like to argue with her, and even Julia seemed surprised at Brenda's tone, until, looking toward her, she perceived a sly smile on her face that showed that she had not uttered the words in earnest. The return of some of Mrs. Barlow's guests, including the two younger girls, from a walk to the beach, put an end to the personal discussion, and soon the party of young people went out to the piazza, where, with their chairs arranged in a large semicircle, they passed a merry hour together. At length, when the three sophomores, or rather juniors, took their leave, Julia said, in an aside to Philip, "Now you won't play any tricks, will you,



on Agnes, to-morrow?" and Philip replied also in an aside, "Well, if you wish me not to, why, of course I won't."

Ever since the day at Shiloh, when they went up to inspect the newly furnished Rosa cottage, Julia and Philip had had a little more interest in each other than ever before. Philip had discovered that Julia was not only companionable, but that she was so sensible that it was well worth while to pay attention to what she said.

"Are you really going to sleep on the 'Balloon' to-night?" called Brenda, as the three youths were walking away.

"Yes, indeed," responded Tom. "I ought to have told you before, that if you happen to have more guests than you can accommodate at Rockley, you might as well send them over to the boat. We have quantities of room, in fact, a whole berth to spare."

"I noticed, all the same," said Will, smiling, "that you advised us to have our valises sent over to the hotel, as we would find it more comfortable to dress there to-morrow."

"Naturally, dressing for a wedding is different from anything else," responded Tom; "and I knew that I should need all the spare room on the 'Balloon' to-morrow to spread around in my best togs — beg your pardon, ladies — toggery. You see, we wish to look our very best when we appear in church."

Philip and Will were already some distance down the road, whence their voices floated with, "Good-night, ladies, good-night, ladies, good-night, ladies, we're going to leave you now."



As they went to their rooms that night, — or rather to their room, since the number of guests in the house made it necessary for Brenda and Julia to share the same room, — “Julia,” said Brenda, “there’s one thing I’m very sorry for. My present to Agnes is n’t really my present.”

“Why, what do you mean, Brenda?”

“Well, you know that I am still saving up for Mrs. Rosa’s money; why, really it seems as if it would take me years, and so I never have anything to spend as I wish. Don’t you think it’s rubbing it in rather hard to make me pay it all back?”

Brenda’s tone was so melancholy, so absurdly melancholy, that Julia laughed in spite of herself. Then, fearful lest she might have offended her, responded, —

“It certainly is rather hard for you. But uncle Robert evidently wishes to teach you a lesson.”

“You see, he made me calculate just how much I could afford to spend for Agnes, and he really kept me down to ten dollars. That does n’t seem much to spend for a wedding present for your own sister, does it?”

“Oh, Agnes will never think of the cost of what you give her, and I know that she was perfectly delighted with that little cream jug. It really is as pretty as can be, and it’s heavy enough in proportion to its size.”

“Well, if it had n’t been for the fuss about this Rosa money, I should have been let spend three times as much. Oh, Julia, I’ve hardly been able to think about it this week, we’ve been so busy; but if that bicycle man really is the one who took Mrs. Rosa’s money, I don’t



know what I shall do. I'm beginning to hate him already."

"My dear!" exclaimed Julia, somewhat shocked.

"Well, I can't help it."

"But he has never done you any harm."

"Ah, but it's just the same thing. I am feeling the effects of it more than any one else."

Then, on second thought, Brenda added, "Oh, of course, you have really had to spend more money, as long as you thought it best to make it up to Mrs. Rosa. But you don't seem to care about spending money, as I do," and Brenda sighed a heavy sigh. "Just as soon as the wedding is over I'm going over to Salem to see how that man lives. Probably we can persuade him to give part of it back."

"You'd better not go without an older person," said Julia, anxiously. "I don't think that it would be exactly safe."

"I'll take you with me," replied Brenda, "and perhaps Amy; with two such wise persons, I couldn't possibly get into any harm. Could I?"

"I'm not so sure," responded Julia, smiling. "We can't always tell where harm is lurking."

"Well, for further protection, we might take Miss South. But good-night, I'm sleepy now."

The first of September dawned mild and pleasant. There was a slight haze in the air such as one may look for in September, a haze which may mean rain, or may not. Brenda, as she looked out toward the sea, before



she was fully dressed, called to Julia, who was in a room across the hall.

"Oh, Julia, what shall we do if it rains; there are only one or two closed carriages, and —"

"Don't worry," and there was a laugh in Julia's voice. "You always look on the dark side. It isn't going to rain."

"But it looks so kind of hazy."

"Ah, if you were more in the habit of rising early, you'd know that it is the regular thing on a September morning for the sun to have a downcast look. By the time you have finished your breakfast, it may be scorching."

"I don't know," said Brenda. "I wonder if any one else is up."

"Well, we ought to be down as soon as possible; there will be ever so many little things for us to do."

"Oh, I'm dressing as fast as I can; I want to see if more presents have come. There's an early train; and some things may have come on that."

Brenda's early rising on this wedding morning was rewarded by the finding of several handsome presents which had come by the late express the night before. Moreover, she was able to give directions (which, however, were not strictly followed) to the men who were decorating the house with flowers.

The long sitting-room, with its windows opening upon the piazza, was trimmed almost entirely with white chrysanthemums, which the florists had been able to get by some process known only to themselves, some time ahead



of the season. Goldenrod and an abundance of glossy foliage from various shrubs were twined around the balusters, and festooned over the tops of the doors and windows. There were masses of white banked up on the mantelpieces, and the fireplaces were filled with goldenrod. There was very little, indeed, for any onlooker to alter or suggest, and whatever Brenda did say, was said rather with the intent of showing her authority, than because she expected to accomplish much by her suggestions.

The family came down and had breakfast individually, one by one. Agnes, indeed, had hers sent up to the little balcony on which her room opened.

There was bustle and confusion everywhere, and Brenda was in her element. With her mother occupied with Agnes, and a house full of visitors, Brenda felt more like the eldest daughter than had been possible for her for a long time.

From time to time she stole into the side room where the presents were still displayed on tables. They were not to be shown at the wedding, as Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, as well as Agnes, disliked this kind of ostentation, but for the gratification of the family they had been placed where those who wished could see them. During the reception, the door of the little room was to be locked, so that the gifts might not seem to be on exhibition. This arrangement suited all the family except Brenda. She thought it a great pity that all the guests were not to have the chance of inspecting the gifts.

“Why, they ’ll think that she has n’t had any presents,” and Brenda pouted as she spoke.



"If you hear any one express such a doubt," said her father, "you might explain," and he pinched her ear playfully. "Just tell any doubters that there has n't been such a display at the Shore within the memory of the oldest inhabitant."

"Oh, papa, but I do think that any one who really asks to see the presents, might be allowed to."

"Well, I'm not really a cruel-hearted tyrant," said her father, laughing, "and if any one of our guests really considers herself ill-treated because she (it is sure to be a girl) has not had a glimpse of the wedding-gifts, why invite her in. You know how to open the door."

"Oh, well, of course," said Brenda, "you understand what I mean. It would seem rather funny to have to refuse any one who had given a present. She might think that we had exchanged it, or something."

Long before half-past eleven, the hour at which they were to start for the church, Julia and Brenda's two young cousins from Albany, and their mother, Mrs. Tolbaird, and two or three other relatives who were staying at Mrs. Barlow's, were seated on the front piazza. Mr. Barlow was walking around in the garden, rather uneasily,—for a wedding in the family is not as great a pleasure to the men-relatives of the bride, as to the women of the household,—when suddenly there came a loud shriek from the back of the house.

"Dear me, what can that be?" cried Mrs. Tolbaird, sinking back in her chair. Mrs. Tolbaird was very nervous, and on occasion had been known to have hysterics.



When the shriek came again, cousin Edward Elston, who knew her peculiarity, rushed toward her, and seized the large fan which lay in her lap. "Don't worry," he cried, "it can't be anything;" but when the third shriek came, he rushed to the back of the house, where Mr. Barlow had hastened at the first sound.

In a moment Brenda had followed them, filled with curiosity; while Julia remained with Mrs. Tolbaird and the little girls on the front piazza.

"It was probably one of the servants," she said, reassuringly. "They are very excitable. Probably the cook has seen a snake in the grass."

"Do they have snakes here?" asked one of the younger girls, with interest.

"I have seen those tiny little green ones," responded Julia; "but they would n't hurt any one."

"I think that this snake must have bitten Mary, she made such a noise," said the second young cousin; and then, somewhat to Julia's relief, Brenda came around the corner of the piazza, looking a little crestfallen.

Below the house, on the gravelled walk, Mr. Barlow and cousin Edward Elston quickly came in sight. They seemed to form a kind of guard over a strangely dressed woman, with black hair, who carried a basket on her arm. Some distance behind walked the housemaids, and one or two other domestics, who all were talking and gesticulating very violently.

When Mr. Barlow reached the gate, he pointed up the road, and seemed to give Thomas some orders. The



woman started in the direction of the railway station, which was not so very far from the house, and Thomas followed at a little distance behind.

"There," said Mr. Barlow, finally, wiping his brow as he walked up to the steps. "So that was a friend of yours, Brenda; I should really like to know how you have found a chance to extend your acquaintance among gypsies."

"I never saw her but once, papa; she is n't a friend."

"Well, she said that you had asked her to come over here to see you, and she certainly had your name and address written in your own hand on a piece of paper."

Now, with all her faults, Brenda was never untruthful, and even at this trying moment, with Mrs. Tolbaird looking at her in surprise, she would not tell what was not true.

"Yes," she said, almost ready to break into tears; "yes, I did."

"Well, it's rather a pity that she should have come at this particular time. If she had stayed a few moments longer in the smoking-room, she might have helped herself to anything that she particularly fancied among the wedding presents."

Brenda could say nothing in reply.

"It was your fault, too, that the door of the smoking-room was unlocked. The woman may have meant no harm in entering it directly from the piazza. She was not supposed to know what there was inside. But it



was no wonder that Mary, coming up from the garden, should have screamed to see a strange gypsy standing in the midst of the wedding presents. I only hope that she did not steal anything." At the thought of such a catastrophe, Brenda cried out, "Oh, have her arrested, papa, perhaps she did! Oh, what will Ralph and Agnes say!"

"There, there, it is more than probable that no harm has been done. When you admitted that you knew her, and had invited her to come over here, I could not treat her exactly like a criminal. Besides, Mary says that the woman had been there but a minute. But how did you happen to know her?"

"It was when Nora and I were on our bicycles. We had our fortunes told."

"Well, well," said Mr. Barlow, "I thought that Nora had more sense."

"Oh, it was I who thought of it," said Brenda; "but I never supposed that she would really come to the house. She said that she would like to buy old clothes."

"There," said Mr. Elston, looking down the road, "there are my men just below the stable. They are to be a guard for the house while the rest of us are at the wedding. With your leave, Robert, I'll give them their directions."

"Now, Brenda," said Mr. Barlow, as the skipper and mate were marshalled into the house to form a guard for the wedding gifts, "this day must not be in any way overcast, and so I hope that you will put the last half-hour out of your mind, at least for the present. Later, I may

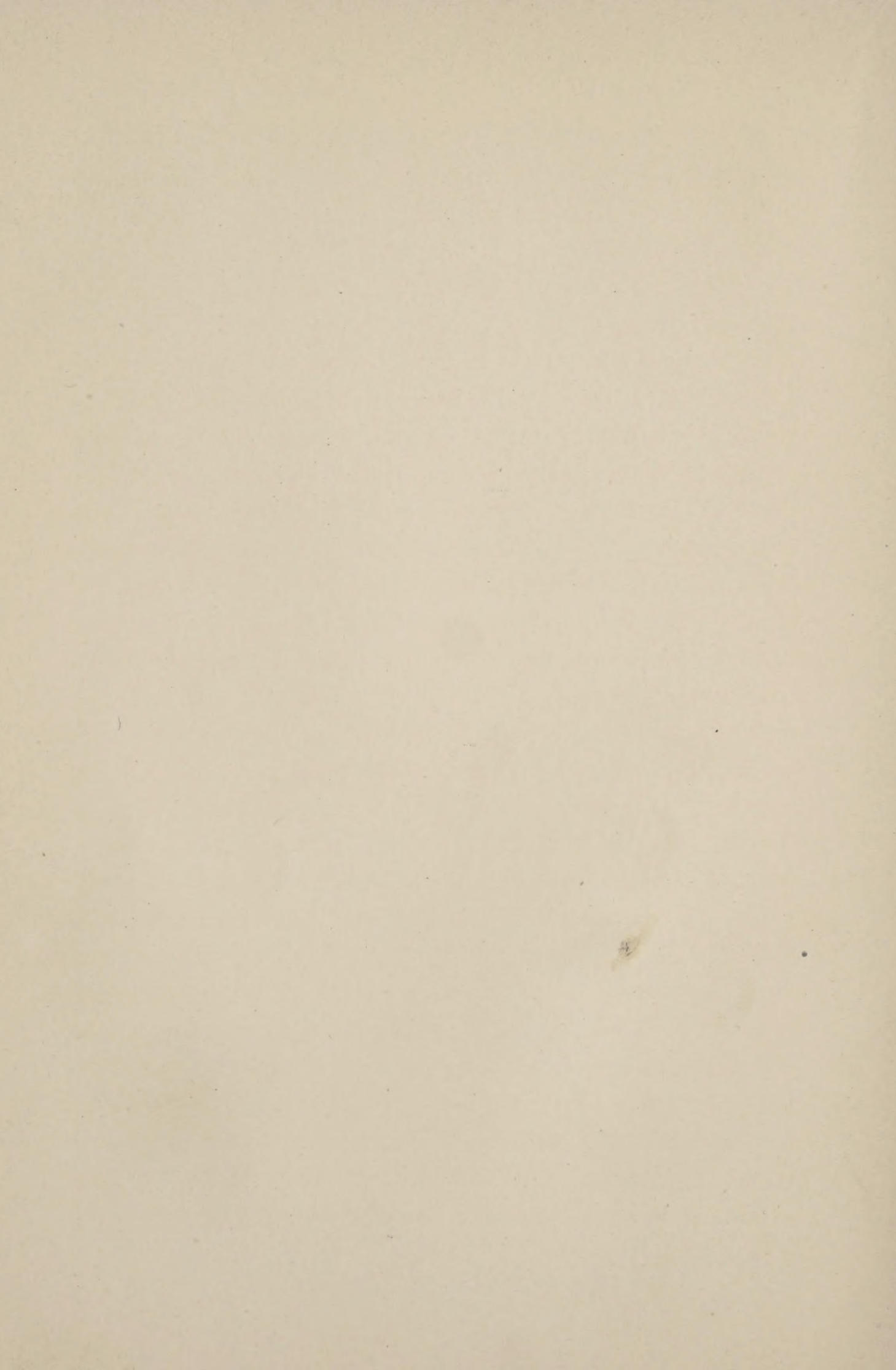


have more to say on the general subject of gypsies," and he smiled indulgently. "Not a word to Agnes, either," he continued, as the ripple of voices from upstairs, and the closing of doors made them realize that the bride was coming.











## XXIII

### THE WEDDING

JULIA and Brenda had been carefully drilled in their small part for the wedding, — to walk immediately in front of the bride and her father on their entrance into the church, and immediately behind the bride and groom after the ceremony. Yet, in spite of this, they naturally felt a little perturbed as they stood in the small vestibule of the chapel for the second or two needed for the bride to arrange her gown and prepare for her march down the long aisle. Brenda and Julia were glad that the aisle was no longer, for they found it rather trying to keep that slow and solemn step with so many eyes gazing at them. For although they knew that they were not the centre of observation, they could not help feeling that almost as much criticism was directed toward them as toward the bride. Even Julia, in talking the wedding over with Brenda, admitted that she had felt like turning about and running home during those solemn moments when Mendelssohn's Wedding March was pealing from the organ, and the whole congregation was turned toward the bridal party as it made its entry into the church. It was Julia, too, who admitted that she felt herself the most important person in the group, inasmuch as it seemed to her as if every pair of eyes there was fastened directly on her.



But the girls were able to conceal any embarrassment that they may have felt. Brenda put out her hand for the bride's bouquet at just the right moment, and Julia helped her adjust her veil as they turned from the altar. Neither of them stumbled over Agnes's train, as they had been afraid they might when they had talked the matter over in advance; and the only criticisms made by the spectators were wholly in commendation of the bride's youthful attendants. Brenda, as she passed the first pew, saw her mother furtively wiping her eyes, and this for a second made her feel a trifle sad. But she was reassured as she caught sight of the beaming face of Nora who, from her corner of a pew, held one hand against her heart in a manner expressive of the greatest admiration.

Perhaps among all who attended the wedding no one felt more thoroughly satisfied than Amy. The pineapple silk had made up to perfection, and with its dainty trimmings of lace, even her mother, anxious though she always was to discourage vanity, was forced to admit that Amy's dress would not suffer in comparison with that of any other girl at the wedding. As for Amy herself, it seemed to her as if she could hardly be the same girl who used to write rather melancholy verses on the subject of her loneliness and generally hard lot. Indeed, while preparing for the wedding festivities, she had not had time to write even one poem, either melancholy or cheerful. Her mother did not go with her to the wedding, giving as a reason that she did not care to make even this occasion an exception to her usual rule of declining all invitations.



"As it is a day affair, and as Fritz will be with you, I have no hesitation in letting you go without me," and with this decision Amy had had to be content. Mrs. Redmond had not been invited to the reception, although Fritz had been asked to it; and the way in which he happened to get his invitation was rather strange.

"You see, when I discovered uncle Josiah looking at that big, fat envelope directed to papa, I suspected that it was something that might concern me. It had been sent to papa's club, and instead of forwarding it to Labrador, they had sense enough to forward it to me. So when I opened it, — uncle Josiah hesitated about putting it into my hands, — behold, there was the invitation to this very Barlow wedding, and a note from Mr. Weston, asking papa to be sure to come if he was in this part of the world, and bring his little boy. I smiled out loud when I read that. I think he thought I was a little boy in petticoats. It seems Mr. Weston and papa once travelled together in Europe for two or three months, and consider themselves great chums. Well, I had some work to make uncle Josiah understand the situation; but finally he understood, and I'm thankful that I was able to persuade him to get me one Sunday best suit last spring, without knickerbockers. So here I am, ready to offer my escort to Miss Amy Redmond on that auspicious occasion, and say, Amy, I've ordered some flowers for you; I knew they'd be all gone if we waited until the last thing to get them."

"Why, it's very good in you to think of a thing like that!"



"Well, you see, I've been kept on short allowance this summer, for fear I'd kill myself, or something. So I've just persuaded uncle to pony up, as they say in Greek; and he's so pleased that I haven't killed myself or got into bad habits this summer that he came down very handsome indeed, — just like a father, in fact, which is saying a great deal."

So Amy and Fritz and Ben Creighton sat together in the church. She had already overcome her jealousy of this new friend of Fritz; for although she certainly had not seen as much of Fritz since his arrival as before, still she realized that it was only natural that the boys should sometimes plan excursions in which she could not very well take part.

When the wedding party had left the church, all the other guests gathered in little groups, and admired the skill with which the church had been trimmed, — the masses of white and green against a background of palm in the chancel, the festoons of green, and great bows of white ribbon between the pews. Nora quickly joined Amy, and introduced Edith, and the five young people went back in the same carriage to the house.

"How young Agnes looked!" said Edith; "hardly more than seventeen, with all those little ringlets curling around her forehead."

"And she's really twenty-three," said Nora.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Edith, and both girls sighed, as young girls will sigh, to whom "twenty years of age" seems to mark the boundary of youth and youth-



ful enjoyment. Indeed, to many girls of fifteen and under, eighteen seems the climax of happiness. When they think of the years beyond eighteen, they can hardly imagine themselves taking any active enjoyment in life. Even Edith and Nora, and Amy, too, who were certainly rather sensible girls for their age, wondered that at twenty-three Agnes could still appear so young and cheerful.

The carriages that rolled away from the little church that bright September morning made an imposing array in the eyes of the natives who gathered at various points of vantage to see them pass. Nearly all of those who witnessed the wedding went on to the reception, for the Barlows had a large circle of intimate friends, and the spacious rooms of Rockley were soon crowded to overflowing. Many of the guests, indeed, found it pleasanter to wander out on the lawn, where two or three tables had been set under canopies.

Mr. Weston's best man was a little too old to devote himself to Julia and Brenda, although he had ridden to the house in the carriage with them, and had treated them with a deference that, to Brenda especially, was very pleasing. The ushers, too, who had been chosen from the special friends of Agnes and Mr. Weston, were also, from Brenda's point of view, very old, ranging anywhere from twenty-five to thirty. The one exception was a younger brother of Ralph Weston's, Arthur by name, a junior at Yale, who, in consequence, took great delight in keeping himself at swords'-points with Philip and Tom and the rest of the Harvard men. But the girls, almost against their



will, were obliged to like him, and they found him altogether an exceedingly merry and agreeable youth. Mr. Weston's mother, and the rest of his family were in Europe, so that Arthur was the only one of his near relatives to whom the Barlows were able to offer much hospitality. Brenda from the first moment took a fancy to the nonchalant young man, who seemed so absolutely confident of everything he said, and who was not for a moment discomfited by the fact that he was the only Yale man in a company that included many Harvard graduates.

On their first arrival at the house Mr. and Mrs. Weston took their place at one end of the long sitting-room that had been prepared for them, under the bell of flowers that had been hung there in their honor. But after a time, Agnes announced that she was very tired of this formality, and that if every one would excuse her, she would move about with the rest of the company.

"That's the most sensible thing you've said to-day," exclaimed the new husband, with a sigh of relief. He, too, had grown very tired of the unnatural position of standing up ("like the President," he had complained) to have his hand shaken. "We must stay a certain length of time," Agnes had said when his first objections reached her ear, — "An uncertain time," he had rejoined, "and the day is growing rather warm — for September."

"Oh, well, it would n't do to leave this place until we have received all the older guests," Agnes had added. "As artists, we are naturally regarded with more or less



suspicion, and we must do the properly conventional thing."

"I don't mind their knowing that I am a Bohemian, and what I am, that thou art also," he had whispered; and then in the next breath he had turned to receive the congratulations of an elderly lady who had known Agnes from infancy, and wished to tell him what a pretty baby she had been, "Contrary to the proverb," he had said proudly, "that handsome infants grow up to be far from pretty. Come, Agnes, after such a compliment, you ought to let me depart from this bower of beauty and enjoy myself."

"Without me?" cried Agnes, in mock alarm, to the great amusement of Nora, who stood near by.

"No, indeed, not without you; I think that you are needed out there on the lawn to chaperone your sister and my brother, who seem to be enjoying themselves in shameless comfort seated in chairs, while we have had to stand here for ages."

Just then the best man, Mr. Moffit, came forward to say that word had been sent by him to Mr. and Mrs. Weston, requesting their immediate presence in the dining-room. Then Agnes realized that her father and mother were no longer in the "bower," as Ralph called it, and suddenly she felt a little tired, and she admitted that she was hungry; and, leaning on her husband's arm, she entered the dining-room, while an orchestra stationed on the rear piazza played the "Lohengrin" wedding march; and a murmur of admiration ran around the room as the



well-matched couple took their places at the head of the table. It would be a long story to describe the speeches made in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Weston, the healths drunk in *apollinaris*, and the occasional tears that fell from the eyes of Mrs. Barlow and other near relatives, as the thought came to them that all this rejoicing meant more or less sorrow in the end, as Agnes so soon must return to Europe for an indefinite stay. There was room at the table only for the older guests, and the younger people sat about in small groups on the piazza, or on chairs ranged along the wall of the dining-room. But with the long French windows open to the piazzas, they could hear what was said as well as those inside.

Finally, came the crowning event of the feast, — the cutting of the wedding cake, which had been the conspicuous decoration of one end of the flower-trimmed table. It was a real old-fashioned bride cake, with tiers and tiers of corrugated frosting, surmounted by a pagoda-like structure, within which was the tiny effigy of a bride with a flowing veil. At the corners of the cake were groups of cupids and doves, and, altogether, it is doubtful if the North Shore had ever seen a more elaborate and tempting wedding cake.

"This for the bride!" exclaimed Mr. Moffit, stepping forward, and, handing her a large silver knife, requested Agnes to cut carefully, as untold treasures were concealed within, the distribution of which might have an important effect on the destiny of several in the assembled company.



At these words the guests looked at one another with some curiosity, and one or two of the initiated exclaimed, "Oh, yes, the ring and the thimble, you know, and those things that they sometimes put into a cake!" But although some had evidently heard of the custom, to the majority it was entirely new. Brenda, for example, was altogether taken by surprise, and enjoyed this all the more because she had not previously been taken into the secret. During the excitement of going to the church and assisting at the wedding, she had half-forgotten the unpleasant incident of the gypsy's visit; but now, for a moment, it all came back to her, and her face clouded a little at the remembrance.

By some artful contrivance of the confectioner's the cake separated itself into slices without any exertions on the part of Agnes, beyond that of raising each slice with the silver knife, and handing it to the ushers, who, in turn, passed it to the guests. It happened that Nora and Brenda were standing together, when Arthur Weston gave to them each her piece of wedding cake.

"Now, choose," he said, mischievously, balancing a plate on each hand. "I should not for a moment dare to make the choice for you, as in that way I might be settling your fate for you."

"Oh, Brenda would n't mind that," replied Nora; "she rather likes to have her future read for her."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the young man, with a searching glance at Brenda. "Perhaps she traffics with fortune-tellers."



"Oh, Nora, how silly you are!" and with this thoroughly schoolgirlish and inconsequential remark Brenda tried to turn the young man's attention from herself; for she had felt her cheek reddening under his gaze.

"Now, choose," he repeated, still balancing the plates impartially, "for I'm anxious to know what you get."

"Why, we shall probably get nothing."

"Well, at any rate, I wish to know that you have nothing," and he stood there, smiling, while Brenda cut her piece of cake with her fork.

"There certainly is something here," she cried, breaking the thick slice in two to disclose—a small silver thimble.

"Aha!" and the young man laughed in what Brenda considered a thoroughly unfeeling way, "that means that you will be an attractive spinster lady, and spend your latter days in the quiet domestic pursuit of sewing. There, you ought to be much obliged to me!"

"I believe that you knew what was in it!" said Brenda, crossly.

Nora's slice contained no treasure; but from the opposite corner, Julia and Miss South had a look of much amusement in their faces, and presently Julia held up a ring, and a moment later she came over to her cousin to tell her that the little golden circlet, which had been found in Miss South's slice, was supposed by the believer in signs to indicate a speedy marriage; and then, as the girls looked over toward the corner where Julia had left Miss South, they saw cousin Edward Elston bending over her



in an attitude that indicated great admiration; and the three schoolgirls exchanged glances which said, —

“Well, really, it looks as if cousin Edward had found some one worth talking to.” It was a standing complaint of Mr. Elston’s that the modern young woman was so frivolous that a sensible man was not justified in wasting his time talking to her.

“Oh,” explained Julia, in answer to a question of Brenda’s, “Miss South has known cousin Edward for a month or so. She wrote me about it. She met him first at a concert at the Eastern club-house, and she has friends on the Neck who know him very well.”

“Ah!” said Brenda, “I thought cousin Edward never went anywhere. He always talks that way.”

“Well, I know that he has invited Miss South to join these friends in one or two sailing parties on the ‘Crusoe’ but Madame Du Launay is nervous about the water, and will not let her go.”

“It’s a wonder she let her come here to-day.”

“Oh, she likes her to enjoy herself, when there is n’t any danger! She likes to hear what is going on.”

“Well, she *has* changed!” said Nora, thinking of the isolated life that the old lady had formerly led.

At this moment a shout was heard from the farther end of the room, and looking across, the three perceived Philip the centre of a group. Soon he was led forward on the arm of Tom Hearst, who insisted on his displaying what Philip had found in his piece of wedding cake, — a small stick-pin, enamelled to imitate a bachelor’s button, and



with this pinned to the lapel of his coat he made the circuit of the room and piazzas.

The fourth of the wedding-cake treasures, the gold dollar, whose possessor was supposed to become a very rich person, by a curious freak of fate went to old Mr. Anstruthers, who really was perhaps the richest man in the room.

"Dear me!" cried Nora, "if he's going to inherit anything more, what in the world will he do with it?"

At that moment, looking out of the window, Nora caught sight of a rather forlorn little figure seated on a large chair under one of the apple-trees at the edge of the lawn. Although the larger number of the young girls at the wedding were dressed in white, it took her only a second to recognize Amy, and her first impulse was to rush forward. But a little reflection, or, rather, a flash of insight, showed her that this might not be altogether agreeable to Amy, since it would evidently call attention to her loneliness. Instead, Nora waited a moment until she could speak to Brenda by herself.

"Amy seems to be alone on the lawn. I thought that I saw her on the piazza with Frances and one or two other girls some time ago."

"Why, yes," said Brenda, looking a little confused. "Dear me, how careless I am; I ought to have looked out for Amy more. You see I forgot that she knew so few people here; it seems so like a great family party. I'm afraid that I didn't even introduce her to Frances, and —"

"Well, that was rather thoughtless. You know how



foolish Frances is; I don't suppose that she would say a word to her unless they had been formally introduced."

"Well, let us both go out and see what the trouble is. Perhaps she has n't had any wedding cake or anything."

But Amy, when questioned, refused to say that she felt lonely or neglected.

"But I know that I've been dreadfully thoughtless," and Brenda, feeling that she had been remiss in her hospitality, was thoroughly repentant.

"Oh, no," responded Amy. "Of course I did not expect to know many persons here, and a wedding is really a family party. So I thought it better to come out on the lawn. I was in a group with two or three girls. But they did n't seem much inclined to talk to me. I thought I'd come here and wait for Fritz."

"No, indeed!" and Brenda spoke in a tone that a stronger willed person than Amy could not have resisted. "You must come back to the house with me. There are ever so many people for you to meet. I am anxious to have them know you."

So Brenda and Nora crossed the lawn arm in arm with Amy, and they walked past the corner where Frances Pounder and two or three girls and youths were laughing and enjoying themselves mightily. Belle was not there, because at the last moment her grandmother had decided that it was not worth while for her to go to the wedding. But Frances had found other kindred spirits among the wedding guests, and although she had seen that Amy was comparatively a stranger, she had not had enough polite-



ness to talk with her, and try to make her feel comfortable. Brenda and Nora, now on their way to the dining-room, stopping in front of Frances, introduced Amy to her and the other girls in the group, and Nora was purposely rather ostentatious in her demonstrations of friendliness toward Amy, calling her by her first name, and addressing one or two questions to her in a tone that implied that she attached much importance to her replies.

"Why, here 's our young oarswoman! Why, I 'm delighted to see you!" exclaimed Mr. Elston, who just at this moment approached the girls. "Have you been saving any more lives lately?"

At this speech, which they could not help hearing, Frances and her friends looked up in surprise. Mr. Edward Elston was a man whom even a supercilious girl like Frances had to admit to be worth knowing. Yet here he was, showing undisguised pleasure in meeting this unknown young girl, whom they had set down as not worth knowing, because they did not remember to have met her before.

Then the mystification of poor Frances was still further increased when Ben Creighton approached and spoke to Amy in terms that implied a more or less intimate acquaintance. For Ben was a person whom she met very often in Boston in the winter. In fact, his mother and the mother of Frances were cousins, and as he was called by the girls of her set an especially good dancer and tennis player, Frances would have been more than flattered, had



she ever been addressed by Ben with the same cordiality that he showed to Amy. It happened, however, that in spite of their distant cousinship, Ben had no great liking for Frances, and indeed he usually went out of his way to avoid her. His eye had been fixed on Amy as he approached the piazza, and his cordial "Oh, Fritz and I have something to show you!" was intended for her ear chiefly. When he came a little nearer, so that the whole group was in view, he showed his embarrassment.

"Can't we all see it?" asked Nora, mischievously.

"Oh, it is nothing; only something Fritz Tomkins and I have been looking up. Amy and I had a bet against him, and I rather think we've won."

Just then Fritz himself appeared, crying, "There, Amy, I believe that you and Ben have won after all; see, here are some of those very mushrooms that I thought could n't be found this side of Ipswich!" and he held up the pale brown and white fungus, which at a little distance did look so like a commonplace vegetable that Frances held up her hands in horror.

"That's Fritz Tomkins, son of the explorer," whispered one of her friends to Frances.

"Oh," said another, "that accounts for his going off to dig mushrooms at a wedding reception. I suppose that he's very scientific."

Fritz himself, as he followed Ben up on the piazza, felt bound to make some apologies, especially to Amy. He had left her rather abruptly when Ben whispered that this would be a good time to go down toward the brook on



Mr. Barlow's grounds, where the ground was just marshy enough to produce those mushrooms.

"Mushroom-hunting at a party, and all these girls sitting by themselves! Well, well, it was n't so when I was a boy!" exclaimed Mr. Elston, who had been a rather amused observer of the interview between Ben and Fritz and the girls.

"Oh, we can get on very well by ourselves," said Nora, independently.

Following her cue, Amy added, "Why, no, I have n't missed them at all."

At this moment Edith came out on the piazza, followed by Julia.

"Agnes has gone upstairs," she said, in a tone which, though meant for Brenda, was still heard by the others.

With a hasty exclamation of surprise, Brenda hastened into the house, and then the others began to speculate whether the absence of Philip and Tom and the other college men might not mean mischief. The older guests by this time had almost all said good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, and the house within was quite deserted. Agnes's especial friends had waited to see her off, and Brenda had made Edith and Nora and her own particular set stay too.

"Agnes and mamma really wish it, so that her going off will seem as bright and jolly as possible." Presently Philip and the other missing youths came out on the piazza, endeavoring to look so sedate that they were immediately requested by the girls to give an account of their mischief.



"If you do not," and Nora tried to make her voice dignified and threatening, "why we shall be obliged to —"

"Obliged to laugh," said Arthur Weston; "indeed you will. I think that we are even with Moffit; but we must watch for them, for they'll probably try to slip off without our seeing them."

A moment later Brenda appeared, twisting her handkerchief between her fingers, while her eyes looked suspiciously red.

"The side door!" exclaimed Philip; "I never thought of that!"

With one accord, following Philip's example, they all ran down on the gravelled walk, just in time to see Agnes in her fawn-colored travelling suit enter the carriage, followed by Ralph Weston, who raised his hat in a last farewell, before taking the reins from Mr. Moffit, who stood at the horses' head.

"Quick, Brenda, you've forgotten the shoe," but even as Julia spoke, Brenda threw a white kid shoe after the retreating carriage. It fell far from the mark, but Philip, running nimbly, picked it up, and in a second he had sent it with a bang against the back of the buggy.

"We did n't accomplish so very much after all," complained Tom Hearst, turning to Arthur Weston.

"No, Thomas was a base deceiver in making us think that they were going in the carryall. I suppose Moffit made him change. We have wasted a lot of white ribbon. I had great hopes that they would drive into Salem with those long white streamers floating in the wind."



"No matter," said Philip; "there are a number of little white bows as well as a handful or two of rice in their travelling bags. Young Weston here helped us manage that."

"You did what you could," said Brenda, sarcastically. "But come, let us go in and gaze at the wedding presents; I feel so blue when I think of Agnes married and away, that I need to look at something bright and shining to cheer me up."



## XXIV

### A DAY IN SALEM

It was hardly more than a week after the wedding, one bright September morning, when Julia and Brenda, under the guidance of Amy, set out for their day in Salem. They were to meet Miss South at the station in Salem, and starting out from that point, hoped to see everything of interest in the old town.

"We 're at your mercy, Amy," said Miss South, good-naturedly. "You can tell us almost anything you wish about the witches, or the old houses, and we — or at least I — cannot contradict you. I have never been here before, and although I have a guide-book with me, I have not had time to look into it."

"Let us see just where we are now," and Julia took the book gently from Miss South.

"Why, the famous Town Pump used to stand almost exactly on this very spot," and Julia, coming to a stop, planted her foot firmly on a piece of brick sidewalk that formed a kind of triangle in the middle of the street.

"There on our left, — I 'm altering Holmes a little, —" said Miss South, —

"There on our left, the slender spires,  
And glittering vanes, that crown  
The home of Salem's frugal sires,  
The old, witch-haunted town.'"



"Bravo!" said Julia; "but what are we to see first?"

"The first old church stood over there, — the Roger Williams Church; you must have heard of it," said Amy, pointing to the nearest corner.

"Oh, yes, that's the little church that's in a yard somewhere back of a big building."

"The very one, Brenda," said Miss South. "It is in the care of the Essex Institute. That is a Salem fact that I have heard before."

"Let's go there at once," cried Brenda; "for as soon as we have seen the things like that, that we have to see, I want to go down on Derby Street. I've an acquaintance down there." Although Brenda's tone was serious, there was a look of mischief in her eye.

"You won't find him," said Julia; "you have n't the exact address, and besides, if I were you, I'd leave it all to uncle Robert."

"Oh, no, Julia, I want the credit of finding him myself. Why, I have n't said a word yet to papa about it!"

Then remembering that what she was saying was Greek to the others, Brenda began to explain.

"It's Miguel Silva, Miss South, — the man who took Mrs. Rosa's money. He didn't go to South America. He's living over here in Derby Street, and I want to go to his house."

"It's rather useless to think of it, Brenda," said Julia. "You could n't have him arrested, and he might be rude to you."

"Oh, no, he is n't that kind of man. He'll feel so



ashamed when he finds that I know about that money that he 'll give it up at once. Can't we go to Derby Street rather soon? When I want to do a thing, I'm always impatient to get through with it."

"The Custom House is in Derby Street," said Amy; "but I did n't think we 'd go there until we 'd visited the Institute and one or two places in this neighborhood. It's a little out of the way."

"Just as likely as not he does n't live there at all," and Julia laid her arm on Brenda's shoulder. "If I were you, I 'd give it up."

"There are a number of foreigners down at the other end of Derby Street," said Amy; "but I did n't know that there were any Portuguese there; they are Poles, a great many of them, and they work in the factories."

"There!" cried Brenda, — "there!" and without a word of explanation she darted across the street. On the opposite corner was a queerly-dressed gypsy woman with a basket on her arm. Julia recognized the red-and-black striped shawl, and the large black bonnet with its bow of scarlet ribbon. It was the gypsy woman whom Mr. Barlow had sent away from the house on the morning of Agnes's wedding. She felt bound, therefore, to follow her cousin, and she reached Brenda's side just in time to hear her say, "But you must take something, for it was my fault that you came to the house."

"Then buy a basket, Miss, — buy a basket," said the woman; "that 'll do."

So Brenda, pulling out her purse, gave the woman



twice the value of the basket that she bought, and she continued her apology. "I'm very sorry that you had any trouble; but it was a wedding."

"Yes, yes, a wedding. I tole you a wedding."

"Well, it does seem as if your prophecy had come true," and Brenda paused for a moment, evidently struck by another thought.

"Can you tell about people who take money, — bad men, you know?"

The gypsy looked at her sharply, and Julia interposed, —

"I would n't say anything about it. She could n't possibly help you."

But Brenda was not to be stopped, although she did not press the woman to forecast the future.

"Miguel Silva?" she continued; "do you know him?"

The gypsy woman looked at Brenda without a change of expression, as if to say, —

"Why do you wish to know?"

"I met him near your camp," continued Brenda. "He helped me —"

This seemed to reassure the gypsy.

"Oh, yes, I know Miguel Silva. He trade for a horse with Jo. He paid pretty good, too."

"Do you hear that?" cried Brenda, turning to Julia. Then she continued her questioning. But the woman now declined to answer. Evidently her suspicion was aroused, and to each question she answered simply, "I dunno."

Finally Brenda turned impatiently away.



"Keep the change," she said. "Come, Julia," and crossing the street again, the two cousins followed Amy and Miss South through the collections of the Peabody Academy. They had time for little more than a passing glance at all the various treasures, — the curiosities from India and China and all the East, the models of vessels that had been famous in the days when Salem led in commerce. There was a genuine palanquin, there were gods that had once been worshipped in real temples, and all the trophies that the old sea-captains had brought back were so carefully classified, according to the country from which they came, that to Julia, at least, it was tantalizing to have only this passing glance.

"You can come again," said Miss South, consolingly. "There is no reason why you should not come over by yourself some day. I am sure that Mrs. Barlow would let you — I should like to come myself, only I really cannot leave my grandmother very often."

"Julia," called Brenda, "we are going into this next room for a few minutes; there are some strange fish and things like that there."

"We might as well go on, too," said Miss South. "I believe that they have a very complete collection of the products of Essex County, — at least, I have read so. I do not know just what there is, at least from observation."

"Do you really mean that everything here comes from Essex County, — all these minerals; why, see, 'from an old copper mine near Topsfield;' and here is a garnet; and it came not so very far from Rockley. I didn't know



that there were things like that in this part of the world," and Julia bent over the cases in surprise.

Then the birds that had been found in old Essex were even more wonderful than the minerals. There was the horned grebe, and the harlequin duck, and the great blue heron, and the white pelican, and owls in infinite variety. Even Brenda, who was not particularly interested in animals or birds, was astonished to find that the neighborhood of her own summer home contained creatures that she had associated only with regions much farther away. Some of the strangest of all the specimens were among the fishes, — the goose-fish, and the fishing frog, the devil fish, and many others, that, as Brenda said, "One would n't like to meet suddenly when out bathing."

But leaving the Museum with all its treasures, when they heard the bells ringing for noon, the girls hurried on to the Essex Institute. As they registered their names in the visitors' book, Julia picked up a huge key.

"What in the world is this?" she asked.

"Oh, that's the key to the little church," replied Amy.

"Then let us go there first."

"Why, yes, there's no objection. Just follow me."

So in a few minutes the four found themselves before a small wooden building standing in the yard back of the Institute. "It's like a doll's play-house — a large one, of course," whispered Brenda to Julia. She was afraid that the remark might seem frivolous if overheard by Miss South. Amy put the huge key in the lock upside down, turned it in a direction the exact opposite of that usually



necessary in unlocking a door, and at once they were inside the plain little plastered building, "the first meeting-house" in which the settlers of Salem worshipped, and listened to the preaching of Roger Williams, and Samuel Skelton, and other early pastors of the First Congregational Church. When a larger building was needed, the little meeting-house was moved away, and was used for different purposes, even at one time as an inn. It is only within a comparatively short time that it was discovered and saved from destruction. This was what Miss South told the girls, as they turned back toward the Institute.

"They ought to have a rummage sale," said Brenda, flippantly, as she walked from one glass case to another in the large exhibition rooms. It certainly was a motley collection, — old dishes, old jewelry, even old shoes and old bonnets, saved to show the present generation the kind of things their ancestors had worn. There was one tiny hair trunk that any one of the three girls could have carried in one hand, and the label above it stated that it had contained the entire wardrobe of a certain young gentleman on his entrance into Harvard in the middle of the eighteenth century.

There was old furniture of various styles, — a spinet with yellow keys; there were old samplers still looking fairly fresh, though the fingers that had worked them had been dust for a century; and finally, there was a case with dolls and other battered toys that the great-great-grandmothers of the present generation of Salem little girls had played with.



Miss South and Julia turned away reluctantly; Amy more readily, because she had seen all these things before; while Brenda was impatient to go once more in the street. Her thoughts were really turned toward the Custom House neighborhood.

While the others lingered for a moment to look at some of the portraits in the hall, Julia asked a question or two of the librarian.

"We've a number of very interesting log-books upstairs," Miss South heard him say; "and if you cared to spend the time some day, why I'd be very happy to have you see them."

In answer to her teacher's look of inquiry, Julia said that she was rather anxious to see some of the journals kept by the old sea-captains, of which she understood that the Institute owned a great many.

"I think that I might spend a day in Salem by myself some time," she said.

"There certainly could be no objection to it," said Miss South. "Now," continued the latter, "the next thing on the programme is luncheon;" and although the girls protested that they were not very hungry, she took them to a neat little restaurant, where they found enough to eat, even if the variety might have been greater.

"Now for the Custom House!" cried Brenda, when they had finished.

"Why not say Miguel Silva at once," interposed Julia; "we won't care."

"Well, we might as well go there and get him off our



mind, or rather," and Brenda corrected herself, "off my mind."

"I don't see exactly how we'll find him," said Amy. "I can only take you to a neighborhood where I've heard some foreigners have lately moved in. There's a very old house, almost dropping to pieces, that some Poles have bought. They have fitted it up for half-a-dozen families, and it used to be one of the best houses in Salem."

With her mind, therefore, fixed on Miguel Silva, I am afraid that Brenda did not pay very close attention to what Miss South told them about the old Custom House, as they stood in front of it, and admired its eagle and cupola.

"It's a rather large building — for Salem," said Julia.

"Why, yes," and Miss South glanced at her book. "I see that long ago Hawthorne said that it was a world too large for any necessary purposes, and had been even in the days of Salem's India trade, and at the present time it seems all the larger."

"Hawthorne was collector here once, was n't he?" asked Amy.

"Not collector, but surveyor of the Port," responded Miss South. "The old Custom House owes most of its fame to him."

Brenda, impatient at the turn of the conversation, was already some distance ahead of the others. Amy, consequently, felt it her duty to hurry on, and in a short time they were almost beyond speaking distance. One hand-



some old mansion after another they passed, all of them facing the water. "The old sea-captains liked to live near the water. Their wharves were usually opposite their houses, and from the upper windows they could look well down the harbor, and see their vessels coming in."

"It's a pity to see these old houses used for tenements or institutions."

"Yes, it does seem a pity. But there! We must hurry. Brenda seems impatient."

Brenda and Amy were now standing in the middle of the sidewalk, some distance ahead, and Brenda was waving her hand impatiently.

"There," she cried, as they drew near, "I believe we've found the place. I asked a woman if there were any Portuguese here, and she pointed to this old house. She said there was a woman named Silva; but she didn't know about any man."

"You don't really intend to go in?"

"Why, of course, Julia, with you and Miss South I shall feel perfectly safe; and Amy isn't afraid of anything."

Julia turned toward Miss South. "Why, there can't be any harm, even though no special good may come from the visit."

A blue-eyed woman answered the knock at the door. She certainly was not a Portuguese in appearance, although she admitted that she was Mrs. Silva.

"Is Mr. Silva in?" asked Brenda, boldly.



"No, Miss," responded the woman, still holding the door, without giving any further invitation to enter.

But Brenda was not to be turned from her purpose.

"Well, I have a picture, — did your little boy die?"

"Yes, Miss," answered the woman; "he has been dead six weeks. I have only the baby."

The tone in which she spoke was Irish rather than Portuguese.

"Well, could we come in? I have something to show you."

"Why, yes," and pushing the front door open, she showed them into a room at the right of the hall. It was furnished like a kitchen, but a crib stood in one corner, in which a baby was sleeping. Mrs. Silva hastened into the bedroom, which led from the kitchen, and brought out two chairs.

When they were all seated, Brenda took from her pocket a card-case. In this she had carried the envelope with the photographs. As she handed one to Mrs. Silva, a smile at first spread over her face. Then she reddened, and a tear fell with a splash on the picture. It was the photograph of father and child.

"Oh, the poor little thing!" she exclaimed; "it's me heart that's breaking for him every day," and she threw her apron over her head.

Now, at the first sight of the neat, pretty woman and the sleeping baby, Brenda's desire for vengeance had begun to weaken.

If she had had a policeman within call, and if Miguel



himself had been present in the room, I do not believe that she would have had the Portuguese arrested, no, not even if she had already had a warrant properly made out against him. It is true that Brenda herself was not the person on whom the duty of prosecuting Miguel would have fallen, and the detective business which she had undertaken was decidedly amateur. Even as it was, she felt like leaving the house without mentioning the wickedness of Miguel, especially when the poor mother burst into a tearful cry, "Oh, the poor little creature, the poor little creature, and I'll never see his likes again!"

At this moment a heavy step was heard in the hall. Julia and Brenda looked at each other. Could it be that Miguel had unexpectedly returned? Evidently he was not in the little tenement when they came in.

But any questions they may have asked themselves came to a sudden end.

"Good afternoon, Nellie," cried a brisk, cheerful voice with a strong brogue; "but sure, you're not crying this fine day!"

There was something familiar in the tone; and when Mrs. Silva's visitor threw back a heavy brown veil, Brenda was astonished to see the face of Mrs. Moriarty, — the stout Mrs. Moriarty who had been so kind to her that hot day at Nahant.

Mrs. Moriarty, in her turn, seemed more than astonished to see so many "reel leddies," as she put it, in Mrs. Silva's room.



"Where 's Luis?" she asked Mrs. Silva; and then, as her eye fell on Brenda, she cried, "Why, here 's the young leddy I told you about, that helped me pick up me money in the 'bus." And then she laughed so heartily that her fat shoulders shook; and all the others, even the sad Mrs. Silva, and the dignified Miss South, smiled as if they too would have liked the power to laugh in that hearty fashion.

Mrs. Moriarty, although she certainly would have made no pretensions to a knowledge of etiquette, was too polite to ask why all these strangers were sitting in Mrs. Silva's kitchen, and so, to break the silence which again settled on them after that hearty laugh of hers, she repeated, —

"Where 's Luis?"

"Oh, he 's off; I don't know where. He 's bought a horse, and he can travel pretty far. He 's selling peaches now."

At the word "Luis" Brenda had looked up in surprise. "Is your husband Miguel Silva?"

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Silva.

"No, indeed," repeated Mrs. Moriarty, adding, "Do you know Miguel?"

"Why, no," said Brenda; "that is, I have seen him, — why, this is his picture," she concluded, pointing to the print of the man and the little boy.

"That!" and Mrs. Silva looked at her in surprise. "Why, that is Luis, and my poor little Luis, too. We named him for his father."



The conversation thus far had been rather puzzling to Julia and Miss South.

Amy had not pretended to understand the drift of it at all, and, indeed, while the others were talking, she had been bending over the crib with the little baby, and as he stirred in his sleep, she fanned him gently with the paper fan which she wore at her belt.

But she was not prepared for the exclamation with which Brenda greeted this last remark of Mrs. Silva's. It was so loud a "What do you mean?" that Amy hastily turned around.

Mrs. Silva and Brenda were both bending over the picture, and Amy heard Brenda say, "But don't you know Mrs. Rosa?"

"I never heard of her," responded Mrs. Silva. "Who is she?"

"Why, she is a Portuguese woman who used to live in Boston; and when I told her that your little boy was dead, she said, 'Poor Maria!'"

"But that is n't my name; it's Nellie, is n't it, mother?"

"Well, by rights it's Ellen," said Mrs. Moriarty, with a twinkle in her eye. "But you do be called Nellie most always."

"Why, Maria's the name of Miguel's wife. She's my sister-in-law."

"Oh!" said Brenda.

"There," said Julia, "that is it; your husband has a brother. Does he look like him?"

"Oh, as like as two peas in a pod; they're twins, and



you could n't tell which was which if you 'd see them together," interposed Mrs. Moriarty.

"But they ain't alike in any other way except in looks," said Nellie, loyally. "Miguel — well, he's my husband's brother, so I won't say much. But —"

"Where is Miguel now?" asked Miss South.

"Oh, we don't know; but he sold out everything last spring, and they say he's gone away off to Brazil, or some place like away off. He took everything he could lay his hands on, and we are the poorer for him. Bad luck to him!"

"Hush! hush! Nellie," cried the good-natured Mrs. Moriarty. "It's good they ain't the same inside that they are outside, for they're twins, Miss. Though there be some, I've heard, that don't think Miguel's so very bad, only smart, — very smart."

"Too smart!" said Mrs. Silva, as Brenda, a little embarrassed by what had happened, rose to go.

"You must keep the photographs," she said, as she turned to bid good-bye to Mrs. Silva. "We were very sorry to hear about your little boy."

"Come, see the baby!" cried Miss South, who had joined Amy and Julia near the crib. Just then the baby gave a gurgling laugh; and when the grandmother realized that he was awake, she went over to the crib too, and as the others made way for her, she seized the little creature in her arms, and held him up for the admiration of them all.

At sight of the baby poor Mrs. Silva's face began to



beam; and as her visitors left the house she said good-bye very cheerfully, and promised to give to Luis Mr. Barlow's address. Brenda had written it on a card, and Mrs. Silva said that she was sure her husband would call at Rockley when next he travelled in that direction.



## XXV

### THE SUMMER'S HARVEST

"WELL, Brenda," said Julia, when they had walked a short distance from the house. "How do you enjoy being a detective?"

"Well, I did n't detect so very much, did I? But really I feel relieved that that pleasant Portuguese of ours is n't Miguel Silva. If it had n't been for Mrs. Moriarty, I should hardly have been able to believe the story about the twins. Why, it's one of the strangest things that I ever knew."

By this time the situation had been explained to Amy, who hitherto had not fully understood it.

"There's one thing," she said. "It may some time be possible for Luis Silva to recover part of that money from his brother, and return it to Mrs. Rosa."

"Why, yes," responded Brenda, "I'll get papa to talk to him about it. Poor Mrs. Silva! About the only good that I have ever done with my camera was to take those pictures of her little boy. It's strange that she never had any taken herself. I've promised to send her half a dozen more. Well, now that I have Derby Street off my mind, what are we to see next?"

"Why, Hawthorne's birthplace, I suppose," replied Amy. "It is not very far from here, and the house of the seven gables, if you feel like walking to it."



"We can call this a Hawthorne trip," said Julia, as they looked at the plain wooden house where the great romancer was born, and compared notes about the various works of his that they liked best.

They walked down to the old Charter Street Burying-Ground (expressly at Julia's request) and read the inscriptions on the old graves, and gazed at the large square house adjoining the graveyard, which is the model for the old house in "Dr. Grimshawe's Secret."

Finally, at Miss South's suggestion, for she saw that they were all growing tired, they engaged a carriage, and in the hour and a half of their drive around the old town, there was little worth seeing that they left unseen.

They saw the site of the old prison where those accused of witchcraft had been held, they went into the Court House, and gazed at Bridget Bishop's death warrant, and they wondered that even two hundred years ago so strange a delusion could have flourished in a Christian country.

"But Salem and the Puritans mustn't take the whole blame," explained Miss South. "The New England delusion was only a faint echo of a belief in witchcraft that had persisted for a good while in various European countries. Only nineteen were hanged at Salem, yet, dreadful as it seems that any should have been victims of such a delusion, these nineteen are but a small number compared with the hundreds who, about the same time, suffered death for the same charges in other countries."

"It's rather strange, though, isn't it, that the Salem



shops should be filled with all kinds of witch souvenirs," said Julia, pointing to one window in which were several pieces of china and silver bric-à-brac, all representing a witch and broomstick.

"It certainly is twitting on facts," replied Miss South.

"We are now going to see a house that is n't exactly what it claims to be," said Amy. "It's called the Roger Williams House, although Roger Williams probably never lived there, and it is also spoken of as 'the witch house,' although no witches were ever seen there."

"Then why the name?"

"Well, during the witchcraft trials, one of the judges, named Curwen, resided there."

"It's a pity to have it turned into a shop." Julia would have liked to see all old houses preserved in their original condition.

"Oh, no," cried Brenda, "it's just the place to get souvenirs; I'm going in," and as the others followed her up the narrow stairs into the low-studded room, they decided that the old building seemed ancient enough to bear out its claim to being the oldest house in Salem.

Before they drove to the railroad station, Amy asked the driver to take them through Chestnut Street, where Julia lost her heart to the elegant, stately mansions that seemed to speak of the leisurely lives of those who dwell in them to-day.

"Even to-day," she said, "Salem is a little out of the current of the ordinary work-a-day world. I might not like to live here always, but I believe that I should enjoy



a year or two in Chestnut Street. Would n't you, Brenda?"

"Not I," replied her pretty cousin, shaking her head. "While I'm in the world, I want to be in a place that's alive. Why, even the electric cars seem out of place in Salem, and if I lived here, I should never dare speak above my breath."

"I wish that you were coming to Rockley with us," said Julia to Miss South as they parted at the station. "Amy is to spend the night with us, and it would be delightful, if you could."

"But I cannot," and Miss South shook her head. "My grandmother, I fear, will think that I have been away too long as it is. But I shall hope to see you soon."

It happened, however, that several weeks passed before Miss South saw the girls from Rockley again. In fact, it was not until some time after they had all returned to town. For a sudden change in the weather sent Madame Du Lau-nay back to the city a day or two after the excursion to Salem, and Miss South had time only to write her good-bye.

Mr. Barlow was highly amused with Brenda's vivid account of her visit to Mrs. Silva.

"It's a pity that you had n't a pair of handcuffs with you, as long as you turned private detective. If you had n't had so large an escort, I should have been greatly displeased with you for prowling about in a neighborhood where you were not acquainted."

"Well, I was rather glad when Mrs. Moriarty appeared.



She seemed quite like an old friend. I don't think that I could have believed Mrs. Silva, except for her."

"But you had seen her only once before. How could you know that she was telling the truth?"

"Oh, you'd know at once if you should see her, you'd be sure that she was perfectly truthful. Besides, she was once the Pounders' laundress, and —"

"Well, does that give her a moral certificate?"

"Oh, well, Frances herself admitted that she was a very good woman, — for one of that class — she said. She had to admit that, for Nora didn't like her finding fault with us for having made Mrs. Moriarty's acquaintance on the way to Nahant."

As a result of the Salem visit, Luis Silva called one Sunday at Mr. Barlow's, and although he would not accept any direct reward for what he had done to save Brenda from a bicycle accident, he did permit Mr. Barlow to give him some legal advice in the matter of a lawsuit that was pending between him and one of his countrymen, and he assured Mr. Barlow that this was worth much more to him than any money.

September, with its shorter days, passed along rather quickly. The reading class went on with more vigor than in the early part of the summer, and for the first time in her life Brenda found herself taking an interest in books for some reason besides their mere power of entertaining her.

Thus she became interested in Madame D'Arblay's Diary, by having first heard Julia read aloud Macaulay's



essay on this attractive woman. To be sure, she only dipped into the diary, reading the description of the visit which Madame D'Arblay and her little boy paid to Queen Charlotte, as well as some of the earlier chapters, — notably where Miss Burney, when lady-in-waiting to the Queen, had so fine an opportunity to witness the trial of Warren Hastings. Some chapters from Irving's "Life of Washington" also made a part of the programme. One of them contained the famous description of the great general crossing the Delaware, and the passage describing the "amphibious regiment" made up of Marblehead men. There was a little poetry on the programme, too; for when, to Amy's horror, Brenda admitted that she had never read "Evangeline," — the only way to reinstate herself, of course, was to become acquainted as quickly as possible with the Acadian heroine.

"Cranford," however, which earlier in the season Brenda had read of her own volition, was the book that she selected as the subject of the essay which Miss Crawdon had requested her pupils to have ready when school opened. Although this is not properly part of the present story, it may be said that not one, even of the older girls, had a brighter or more interesting essay; and her success so spurred Brenda on, that from that time composition-writing became one of her favorite exercises.

It is not to be supposed, of course, that until she met Amy, Brenda had never read any serious books. But such reading on her part had been fragmentary, while in summer she had rather made a rule for herself that



only the very lightest reading was permissible. But the comments and the explanations made by Julia and Amy when she read with them, their allusion to books, and to authors with whom she had no acquaintance piqued Brenda to such an extent, that she ceased to pride herself on her ignorance of what she called "deep books." As a matter of fact, when a girl has reached this point, she is far on the road to wisdom. Only the girl who thinks her own way absolutely better than that of any one else is in danger of making no progress in knowledge.

Nora's stray words about the Flower Mission had borne good fruit in Brenda's mind. Although the season was rather far advanced before she did much work in the matter of collecting and arranging flowers for the poor, still, at Amy's suggestion, the flowers were freshly gathered on the mornings when the reading class met. Then, while one of the trio read, the other two arranged them in suitable bunches. Instead of going to the regular Flower Mission, these flowers from Rockley were sent to one of the Settlement houses, as it was always possible for some of the residents there to distribute them as soon as they arrived. Some such arrangement was necessary, as the girls, in spite of their zeal, were not able to have the hamper ready at precisely the same hour on given days of the week. Amy was of great help in this work, because in the neighborhood of her house were more wild flowers than immediately around Rockley. Flowers from the garden were not abundant in September, for this was the month in which the most of their flower work was



done, and Amy's wild flowers were Brenda's sole dependence.

The good influence which Amy exercised over Brenda was, naturally enough, observed with great pleasure by Mr. and Mrs. Barlow. They appreciated it all the more, because they knew that it was exercised almost without any realization on Amy's part that she was doing anything for Brenda. Simply by acting herself, she had made herself so attractive to the latter that the more serious standards of Amy seemed to Brenda well worth adopting. Naturally, she couldn't make them wholly her own, or at least, not all at once; and yet she had taken several steps forward in the direction of higher ideals.

Julia, too, liked Amy very much. But Julia's character was already more nearly formed than Brenda's, and less likely to be influenced. As she was much the same kind of girl as Amy, why was not her influence on her cousin equally great? It is not in my power to answer this question exactly. But many young girls will admit that the members of their household are the last persons whose influence they are willing to acknowledge. Brenda had overcome her early prejudice against Julia, and she seldom now showed opposition to anything that her cousin suggested. But remembering the experience of the past winter, Julia was always slow in suggesting things to her cousin. The indirect influence of Julia was stronger than she herself realized, and she was very glad indeed that Brenda had been attracted to a girl of Amy's fine character.



She could not help smiling when she noticed that "The Countess" novels had disappeared from her cousin's bookshelves.

"I might have argued against them for weeks, without affecting Brenda in the least. She would have thought that books that I called a waste of time to read myself would not be equally harmful to her. She would have thought that I was measuring everything by a College standard. But Amy—well, Amy is a girl like herself, a few months younger in fact, and she has succeeded, without any effort on her own part, in making Brenda admire her. Why, Brenda is almost anxious to follow in Amy's footsteps! A mere cousin doesn't count for much at such a time."

Julia's words were probably as near a true explanation of Brenda's feeling as any that could be given.



## XXVI

### TWO HEROINES

IN spite of the fine opportunity afforded her at Rockley, Julia, by September, had learned to swim only a few yards at a time. Brenda and Amy always laughed at her timidity, and they had also helped and encouraged her. But neither laughter nor encouragement had given her a sense of ease in the water. She was happy only when she could bathe in the surf, or splash about in fairly shallow water with a motion that was something between floating and swimming.

Brenda and Amy, on the contrary, were expert swimmers, at least for their age, and they found it very hard to understand Julia's timidity. In July and August at the bathing hour, which varied each day according to the tide, the pretty little semicircle of beach was crowded with bathers, or with those who watched them. Old and young went in at the same time, and the scene on the sands was always a merry one. In September the bathers were fewer, and there were not many lookers-on. But Brenda continued to bathe, even on days when the temperature of the water made it rather unsafe to do so. Just before the middle of the month, however, there came a warm wave, and for three or four days the ocean seemed more tempting than it had been even in midsummer.



"Come, Julia," called Brenda, "you must come down with me. I am to meet Amy and Fritz at the rocks, and at three o'clock the tide will be exactly right. I declare, I shall feel like staying in for an hour, it has been such a hot and tiresome day."

"Oh, Brenda, I would really rather stay here; the breeze is coming round towards this side of the house, and this room is shaded. A book and an easy-chair are much more comfortable than a bath."

"There, Julia Bourne, you can never say that you are not lazy. This is the one thing about which you are absolutely lazy. I believe that you dread the trouble of the bath!"

Brenda's tone was one of mock severity; but a pleasant smile belied the gravity of her words.

Julia closed her book slowly.

"Well, perhaps I am lazy; for I am willing to admit that I would rather not exert myself. But perhaps I need the exercise, and bathing is almost the only exercise one can take on a hot day like this."

"Oh, yes, come on! You know that you always enjoy yourself when you are once in the water," and Brenda pirouetted out of the room so energetically that Julia smiled, calling after her, —

"Don't forget that it is a hot day!" A half-hour later the two cousins stood on the beach in their bathing-suits, and looked around for Amy and Fritz.

"We might as well go in without them," Brenda at length exclaimed a little impatiently. "But I don't see



why they have n't come; for Amy always does what she says she will do." There were a few others in the water, but, as it happened, no one whom the cousins knew very well. Suddenly, after they had been in a minute or two, a girl on the shore waved her hands, and continued waving until Brenda realized that she was beckoning to her.

"I wonder who it can be?" Then, as she swam shoreward, "Why, it's Frances! I wonder what has brought her down here."

In a few moments Brenda rejoined Julia, and told her that Frances was visiting the Whittingtons at their cottage on the cliffs just beyond Rockley.

"She's coming out in her bathing-suit presently. She says that she has been taking lessons, and that she can do all kinds of remarkable things in the way of swimming and diving."

Presently Frances joined Brenda and Julia. She nodded at Julia, and approached Brenda with more enthusiasm.

"I'm glad that you are going in to-day, Brenda. None of the Whittingtons care for bathing, and so I came down to the beach alone. If there had been time, I should have sent some one up to your house to inquire. But I didn't think of it until the last minute, and then Mrs. Whittington said it was too hot to send one of the maids so far. Some people have such ridiculous ideas about their servants, and the man had gone over to Marblehead. But she thought that I'd find you here."

By this time the two girls were some distance out in the water, and Frances continued her conversation with Brenda



without paying the slightest attention to Julia. This treatment, however, did not disturb Julia. She was, indeed, too well accustomed to Frances to let her cause her the least uneasiness. Besides, she found it altogether more amusing to paddle about, now and then supporting herself with a board which in some way had drifted within the bathing limits. This was far pleasanter to her than following Brenda and Frances into the deeper water. Besides, out there the jelly fish, white or pink, were altogether too numerous for Julia's fancy. Brenda did not mind them. In swimming she was expert enough to steer clear of them. She was inclined to laugh when Julia, with a scream of annoyance, drew back from the star-shaped pulpy things that floated about, altogether too near the surface of the water.

"It would be so very unpleasant," she always thought, "to swallow one of those queer things, and there seems to be no reason why they should n't drift into my mouth."

So now she drifted indolently on the surface of the water. Her finger-tips rested lightly on the edge of the board as she moved along, making the swimming motions with her feet. She realized that she was staying a long time in the water; but she felt so thoroughly refreshed that she dreaded going back to the warm shore. Glancing toward the beach, she saw that it was altogether deserted.

"Where in the world are Brenda and Frances?" she suddenly exclaimed to herself, glancing out in the direction where she had last seen them, splashing the water at each other after they had finished a short race.



But Julia's reflections were now interrupted by a scream.

"Julia! Julia!" she thought she heard Brenda's voice call, although Brenda herself was not in sight. Then her eye rested on a rock that was the farthest out at sea of the rocks, where she and Brenda, and Fritz and Amy and many other of the people near Rockley were accustomed to sit. These rocks showed a steep, high surface to the ocean, and at low tide the side toward the sea was covered with seaweed. There was one of these rocks which was wholly covered at high tide, and at low tide only the top of it was to be seen. The space between it and the others was too deep for wading, even at low tide. Indeed, there was deep water all around it. Julia had been warned by her uncle and Brenda not to go near it, as a current on one side made this a perilous spot even for a good swimmer.

"There's no danger of my ever going out there," said Julia. "That's one of the advantages of being a poor swimmer. I'm not likely to take any risks." Remembering her uncle's caution, great, therefore, was Julia's surprise, this September afternoon, on looking toward the rock, in the direction of Brenda's voice, to see her apparently lying on the surface of the water, with one hand resting against the stone surface.

But where was Frances?

In an instant Julia realized that this was not a time for questions. She must do something at once — but what?

Even as she was pondering what to do, she was floating a little nearer her cousin. "The board, oh, Julia, the board!" She seemed to hear Brenda cry, and she pushed



on faster. She never knew how she managed to do it, for usually the fact that she had reached deep water had an almost paralyzing effect, impelling her to turn around toward the shore. But now, regardless of deep water, regardless of the jelly fish that she passed on every side, she pushed on. So strong did she feel, so sure of herself, that she would have flung the board aside, to press on toward Brenda; yes, to swim to her, although up to this time she had never tried a quarter so long a course. After what seemed to her a very long interval, she came within speaking distance of Brenda.

“Frances has hurt herself,” cried the latter, “a stone, or something — oh, hurry, Julia, I cannot hold her much longer!”

Julia now, on looking more closely, saw that Brenda was keeping Frances's head above water, and then —

“Oh, Julia, I am so thankful to have you here! I do not think that I could have kept up a minute longer.”

Poor Brenda gave a gasp of relief as Julia pushed the board in front of her. The strain had evidently been very severe. Julia for the moment was puzzled. She did not see wherein her coming had improved the situation. At this moment Frances opened her eyes.

“Oh, my foot!” she cried in pain.

“There, Frances,” said Brenda, encouragingly, “now we shall be all right. Just put your hands on the edge of the board, and I will keep hold of the back of your blouse. I can swim well enough with one arm, and we will aim for the small rocks.”



"Yes," continued Julia, encouragingly, "you must remember that we shall quickly get into shallower water."

"Are you coming, too?" asked Brenda.

"Why, yes, why not?" responded Julia. "I will swim just behind, in case of any accident, if Frances should slip off."

But Frances did not slip off, and in a really rather short time, although it seemed long enough to the cousins, they had reached shallow water. Here Julia was glad to stand upright, and wade to the shore, a little ahead of Brenda and her charge.

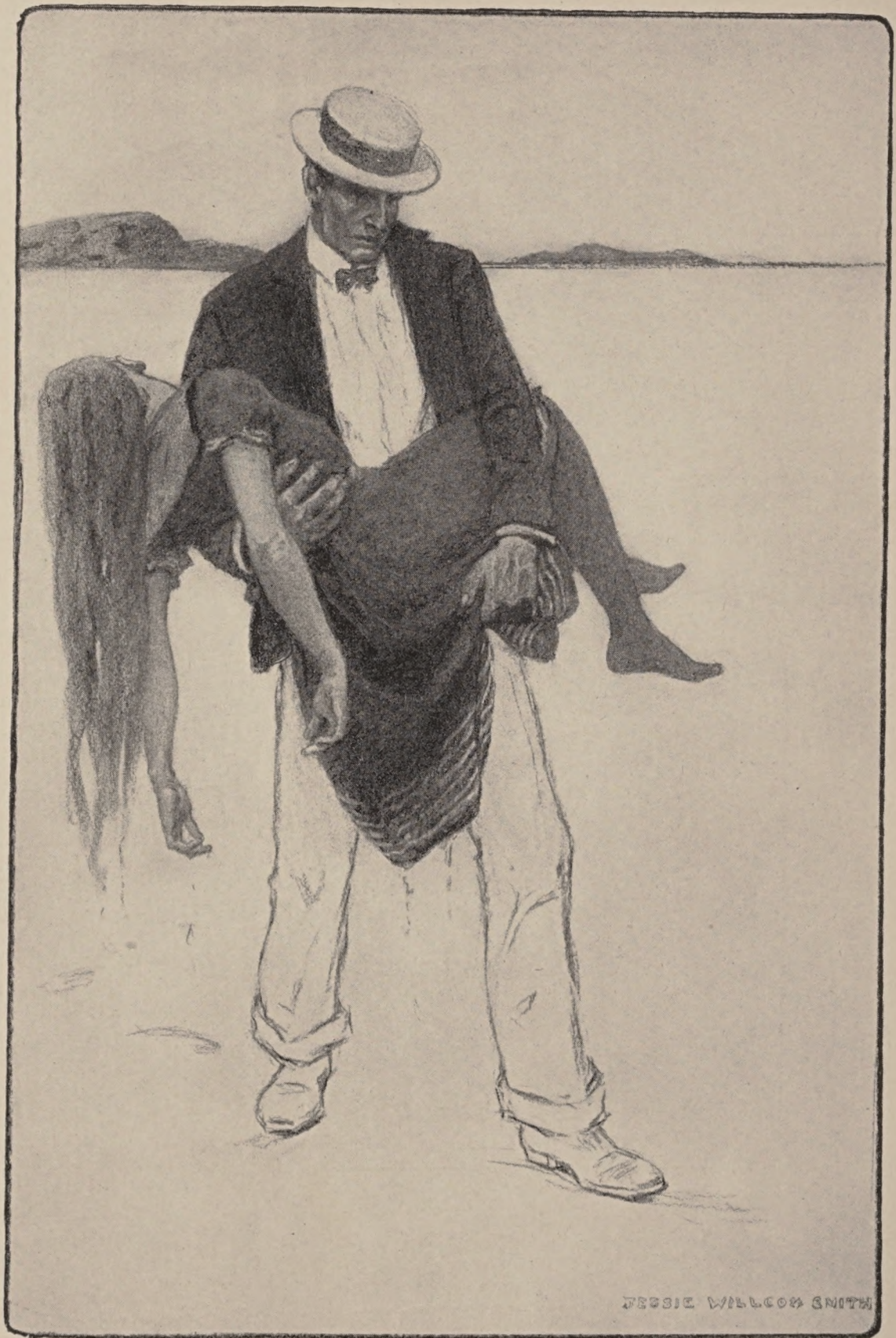
"I have found a flat stone," she said, turning around, and wading back to help Brenda with Frances. For now that they had reached shallow water, Frances could neither float nor walk. She could only kneel while Brenda supported her. When they returned, the two girls made a kind of basket of their hands, and, raising Frances on it, they managed to get her to the shore. Just as they had reached the rock, they heard a voice from the summit above them.

"Who's been doing what? Where in the world have you been?"

"Why, it's Arthur Weston!" cried Julia. "How in the world did he come here? I thought that he was in the woods of Maine."

The young man had not waited for a reply. His sharp eye had seen that there was something amiss with the girls, and clambering down, regardless of seaweed and pools of slimy water that did not improve the appearance











of his light tan shoes, he soon stood in front of them. Here, to his credit, it must be told that the young man did not laugh, though he may have been tempted to do so. For certainly he could never have seen a more bedraggled or disconsolate-looking group of bathers. Very quickly, however, he realized that some mishap had befallen them, and when he found that Frances was the injured one, without a word he stooped forward, lifted her in his arms, and walked with great strides across the beach.

"Where are you going, where are you going?" cried the girls.

"To that bathing house over there," he replied; "the door is open, and we can fix a couch for her on that bench. There's a stable up the road, and I'll have a doctor or a carriage here before you can turn around."

"Brenda, run to your bath-house and get dressed," said Julia, "I will stay with Frances until you return."

"There's an old golf cape in Mrs. Whittington's bath-house," murmured Frances, "if you could bring it here, I could use it in the carriage."

Now while they were speaking Arthur Weston had gone off, and, in a surprisingly short time, he returned with a carriage.

"They had one harnessed," he explained; "now where shall we go?" for he and the driver were already lifting Frances into the carriage.

"To Mrs. Whittington's," said Brenda, who had now come back from her own bath-house, showing very little evidence of her hasty toilet.



"There's room for you, too; but we mustn't lose time."

"Lock up Frances's bath-house; the key is in the door," called Brenda, as they drove away, leaving to Julia the task of dressing herself and doing up Frances's clothes into a large bundle, so that they should be ready when Mrs. Whittington's man should come down for them.

In the course of half an hour Brenda and Arthur Weston drove back in great spirits.

"We've come to drive you home," cried Brenda.

"You mean that I am going to drive you both home," interposed young Weston. "You do not suppose I would let such heroines walk!"

"Yes, heroines, Julia!" cried Brenda, laughing. "You and I are both heroines. That's what Mrs. Whittington called us, and she must know. Frances says that we saved her life."

"Nonsense!" said Julia. "At least, I can speak for myself. I didn't save her life, although I cannot tell what you may have done."

"Well, I am sure that *I* did n't save her life," returned Brenda.

"Then it must have been I," and Arthur Weston mockingly assumed a self-satisfied expression. "Her life is certainly saved, and if you girls repudiate the heroic deed, why, the credit must be mine!"

"All joking aside," interrupted Julia, "I should like to know what really happened. Up to the present moment I have only the faintest idea."

"Why, she stubbed her toe; that is, she succeeded in



some way in dislocating it. I told her to look out for that rock, but you know that she never will take advice. I am surprised that she felt it so much, though."

"There was no pretending about it," interposed the young man. "She certainly was in great pain."

"A little thing like that often is harder to bear," added Julia, "than something that seems much larger. Frances must feel very grateful to you for supporting her in the water so long."

"Strange as it may seem," replied Brenda, laughing, "she seems even more grateful to you. She thinks that, without you, we both should have drowned."

"Oh, dear, no! If I hadn't been there, you would have found some way to climb up that rock, sharp and slippery though it looked."

"Oh, I can't bear to think of it!" and Brenda shuddered. "You cannot imagine how helpless I felt for a moment. I was afraid that you wouldn't be able to reach us. How did you manage to do it? You have always seemed so frightened in deep water."

"I can't tell how it happened," responded Julia. "I just seemed to be carried along, and I forgot to be afraid. Do they think that Frances will have much trouble with her foot?"

"She won't be able to use it for some time, and she is in a rather nervous state. But every one is thankful that it wasn't worse."

"Can't we talk of something more cheerful?" asked Arthur Weston. "We've all been rescued, and no lives



are lost. Have you heard from the happy couple? No one sent a word to the woods of Maine, and I don't like to feel that the wedding deprived me wholly of my only brother."

"Oh, we've had letters!" responded Brenda, "and two have been forwarded here for you. I wondered why, for I didn't know that you were coming back this way."

"As if I could pass within a hundred miles of Rockley without coming to see you!"

Brenda looked at the young man out of the corner of her eye. She wondered if he were in earnest. But she did not wish him to know that she wondered.

"No, indeed!" he continued. "I wanted to see you all, and I had the Portland express stop at Salem, expressly."

Julia gave a merry laugh.

"I was trying, Brenda, to see which of us ought to take all these compliments to heart. But a man who can make puns is n't to be taken in earnest."

"Ah, well!" and Arthur sighed heavily. "I cannot see why some one is always doubting me. Here I've driven you the most roundabout road to the house, thinking that you would thus have the chance to pay me at least one compliment, and not one have I had, except those that I've paid myself."

"You're looking rather sunburned," said Julia.

"That's what your aunt said, when I saw her at the house."

"Oh, you've been at the house?"



“Of course ; how should I otherwise have known where you were? What should I have done with my valise? In response to Mr. Barlow’s kind invitation, I came prepared to stay at least a day. The valise would have been terribly in the way when I undertook the work of rescue.”

“I’m glad you are going to stay,” said Brenda. “It’s been just a little dull the last few days.”

“And you think that I’ll make things livelier. Well, we’ll see.”

As the carriage at this moment drove up to the door of Rockley, further conversation between Arthur and Brenda was interrupted.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE END OF THE SUMMER

WHILE the influence of Brenda on Amy had been less marked than that of Amy on Brenda, it had still been sufficient to make Mrs. Redmond approve highly of the intimacy between the two. She was pleased that this companionship had come to take her daughter out of herself. She noticed with some amusement that Amy's poetry was taking a more cheerful cast, and that she less often wrote about "sad heart" and "dreary days," and other melancholy themes. Indeed, she was not at all sorry that Amy spent less time now in verse-writing, for she knew that her daughter's immature efforts had little value, and that her poetic talent would not be entirely blighted if permitted to rest for a while. She had never suggested to Amy that she should write less, fearing that by so doing she might seem unsympathetic. But since this result had been accomplished in another way, she felt extremely gratified.

As I have said before, the angles of Amy's disposition were decidedly rounded off by her contact with her new friends. She had become more tolerant of the foibles and frivolities, which formerly she had so strongly disapproved. She had a genuine admiration for Julia, which increased when she learned that she was preparing for col-



lege. For if she could, if the way should ever open, she intended to go to college herself, and she had planned her High School course with this end in view. Although she admired Julia, she was fonder of Brenda, and the two were drawn together by the mysterious attraction of friendship, which is no respecter of persons, and which often brings together those whom observers think very unlike.

Besides the intangible benefits, others that were more evident had come to Amy from her acquaintance with the family at Rockley. First of all, Julia had sat for a miniature to Mrs. Redmond. When it was finished, Mr. Barlow had been so pleased with it that he had urged Mrs. Barlow to sit.

At one of the sittings at Rockley, Mr. Elston had appeared one morning, and, to Mrs. Barlow's surprise, he and Mrs. Redmond at once recognized each other.

Before her marriage, when she was Amy Longstreth, Mr. Elston had known Mrs. Redmond, and he had also known her sister-in-law, now dead, Fanny Redmond.

"Amy Redmond" had therefore seemed to him a strangely familiar name when he had first heard it. He had meant at some time to ask Amy about her family; but when he saw Mrs. Redmond the coincidence was explained. Mr. Elston had many questions to ask the latter about people in the distant town that had once been her home. Years before he had been in the habit of visiting it, and it saddened him to hear of the breaking up of families and of the many changes that had come in the families of other friends.



"Really," said Mr. Elston, "I have been very stupid; for I can see now that your Amy resembles you and her aunt as well. I was a great admirer of Miss Fanny Redmond, and from things I have heard Brenda say, I am sure that your Amy in many ways is like her aunt. She — that is, Miss Fanny — used to write poetry, didn't she?"

"Ah, yes," responded Mrs. Redmond, with a sigh. "Her talent comes to Amy from her father's family. I have not encouraged it as much as I might, for Amy must lead a practical life, and verse-writing is not exactly practical."

"Oh, well, now, you can't tell. There was Mrs. Browning," said Mr. Elston.

"Amy will never be a Mrs. Browning," said Mrs. Redmond, smiling. "Indeed, I have not that ambition for her, although I wish her to have as good an education as I can possibly afford her."

"Amy has been of great assistance to Brenda this summer," interposed Mrs. Barlow, who had been listening to the conversation. "Brenda herself does not realize how greatly she has been helped by Amy. But her father and I have realized it, and we are glad that the two girls have become warm friends."

Just then Brenda burst into the room, closely followed by Arthur Weston.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Redmond; good-morning, cousin Edward. Oh, mamma! Arthur has a letter; he must go to New York the first of the week to meet Ralph and



Agnes. They want him there for a day or two before he returns to Yale."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Barlow, with less surprise than Brenda apparently expected. "Yes, I have just had a letter myself."

"Well, what I wanted to ask is this; now you won't say 'No,' will you, please?"

In spite of herself, Mrs. Barlow smiled, "I can tell better, when I have heard your request."

"Well, it's the end of everything now; every one is going somewhere, and Philip has to be in Cambridge next week, and — well, we all want to go to the Fair — the County Fair."

"Oh, Brenda, really I do not see —"

"Oh, yes, we have been talking it over, Arthur and I, and we would like to go on our bicycles. I am crazy to try that new one, — Philip will go, too, and Julia and Amy."

At this Mrs. Redmond looked up as if to say something, and Mrs. Barlow responded, "Ah, if you have settled it, why do you ask me?"

"Oh, of course we have n't settled it, mamma. I know that you never care to go to the Fair yourself; but I thought that perhaps you would let us go by ourselves."

"No, Brenda, really I cannot, — especially on your bicycles. If any older person were with you, I might be willing. But your father is too busy, and I really do not care to go. There are other things that you might do. You might make an excursion to —"



"Oh, no, mamma, there is really nothing else; of course, if we cannot, we cannot, and Arthur will be so disappointed."

"There is nothing to prevent Arthur's going with Philip," and Mrs. Barlow smiled at Brenda, while laying her hand affectionately on her arm.

At this moment, Mr. Elston, who had been talking with Philip, looked up.

"Cousin Anna, would you approve of me as an escort for the girls?"

"Why, cousin Edward, the very thing!" and Brenda clapped her hands with delight.

"But I thought that you did not care for wheeling," Mrs. Barlow looked hard at Mr. Elston, to see if he was not planning an unnecessary sacrifice.

"I do not often have a chance to enjoy my wheel in the society of so many young persons. As the yachting season is nearly over, I need some excitement."

"We'll give you all you wish," said Brenda.

"I trust that your charges will not give you too much care," responded Mrs. Barlow; "but I can assure you that, so far as I am concerned, I have always found them reasonable."

"Yes, if you are reasonable, and that means agreeing to everything that we wish, Mr. Elston," said Arthur, "we'll promise to be fairly obedient."

Mrs. Redmond took no part in this conversation. But later, when she was alone with Mrs. Barlow, she said, rather seriously, "I fear that Amy cannot go to the Fair.



She has never had a wheel, and although I hope that she will have one next year, it has not been expedient to get one this season."

"That reminds me," said Mrs. Barlow. But of what she was reminded, perhaps a word or two from Amy will give a clearer idea.

"MY DEAR NORA," she wrote to Nora, who was now in the mountains,

MY DEAR NORA, — I have had such a delightful surprise. This morning I went downstairs feeling rather forlorn. You see, Brenda and the others — even Fritz and Ben — are going over to the Essex County Fair to-morrow on their wheels. It seemed rather hard that I could not go, too. It was extravagant even to think of hiring a wheel, and, besides, mamma has always been timid about letting me hire a wheel. She thinks that they are not safe. I really did feel rather downcast. For it was going to be about the last excursion of the season. I am pretty busy at school now, but as this was to be on Saturday, why, of course, I could go. But how lucky it is that I have learned to ride a wheel. For when I came down to breakfast this morning (by the way, I'm quite a lady of leisure now, for Maggie Murphy is regular "help" for us now instead of just "assisting") —

Well, when I came downstairs, mamma asked me to go around to the side of the house, and there was a bicycle — a girl's bicycle — and mamma said that Mr. and Mrs. Barlow had sent it to me. They think that my acquaintance has been a good thing for Brenda. I don't see how they persuaded mamma to let me have it. But as long as I have the wheel, I need n't ask any questions. Was n't it lovely of them? I fancy that Brenda had a hand in it too. Yet I certainly wonder that they should all be so kind to me.



The rest of the letter was brief, and intended for Nora's eye alone. It explained why she had written a certain little poem which she enclosed, for during Nora's short stay at Rockley she had proved more appreciative of Amy's literary work than Brenda. Brenda liked almost everything that Amy wrote. After they once knew that she wrote verse, Amy was persuaded to let the girls at Rockley read much that she had written.

Nora was more discriminating. In consequence, Amy heeded Nora's suggestion, and had sent her one or two poems to read. Incidentally, in the letter, she gave her what news she could of Brenda and the others.

Mrs. Redmond had hesitated at first about accepting the wheel. But Mr. and Mrs. Barlow so pleasantly gave their reasons for wishing Amy to ride with Brenda, that it seemed ungracious to refuse.

"Besides," said Mrs. Barlow, "we were intending to get Brenda a new bicycle this month, as her own is no longer fit for her to ride. But a strange thing happened yesterday. Brenda had a note from Frances Pounder, saying that she had ordered her own new chainless wheel to be sent over to Brenda from Nahant. She feels grateful to Brenda for her exertions the other day, and she knew that Brenda has desired a chainless wheel. Poor Frances herself will not be able to ride this season, as the injury to her foot is much more serious than the family at first thought. As we have not to buy a wheel for Brenda, I hope that you will let us give this one to Amy instead."

Mrs. Redmond was too sensible a woman to refuse a



gift so delicately offered, especially when she knew that its acceptance meant so much to her daughter.

"Amy! Amy!" called cousin Joan, on the morning of the ride to the County Fair. "Come upstairs for a minute." Then, when Amy stood before her, "There, I just wanted to see how you looked. Turn around so that I can see the back of the skirt. Well, it's surprising what your mother can do with the needle. She's fixed that so's you could n't tell it from a tailor-made. I don't believe those Rockley girls will look a bit better than you."

"Thank you, cousin Joan," said Amy, turning around, as the invalid wished. Since Amy's acquaintance with Brenda and Julia had shown itself to be something fairly substantial, cousin Joan had been much more sympathetic than formerly. On the evening of the wedding, for example, she had lain awake until Amy returned, and had urged her to tell her everything that had happened. She asked for details that poor Amy had to admit that she had not noticed, — the length of the bride's train, the kind of flowers that she carried, the color of Mrs. Barlow's gown, and the names of many of the guests. Although she was rather tired, Amy sat down on the edge of the bed, and told an interesting story, not even forgetting the cutting of the wedding cake, and the fun that had grown out of that.

Amy could tell a good story when she wished, and she tried to make her descriptions as picturesque as possible, for she realized how narrow the invalid's outlook was, and



she saw that it meant a great deal to her to have this glimpse of the doings of more fortunate people. One of the best effects on Amy of her intimacy with Brenda had been the broadening of her sympathy, so that she was much less impatient with the little peculiarities of cousin Joan, that sometimes were rather trying.

"Don't forget," said cousin Joan, as she started to go downstairs, — "don't forget to see if Mrs. Murphy's tidy gets a prize; it's real Irish lace, and she's been working on it for a long time."

"Yes, 'm," said Amy, as she hastened down and out to the side of the house, where Fritz and Ben were already waiting for her.

They were not to ride all the way to the Fair, but at the station were to join Brenda and the others, and go by train to Salem.

"Let me see," cried Mr. Elston, as they got out of the cars, "are all my charges here?" and he proceeded to count "one, two, three, four, five, six — why, with myself we are seven. That will suit the poetic members of the party," and, with a smile in Amy's direction, Mr. Elston mounted his wheel and led the way. They dismounted once or twice only, once merely to take breath, and once to visit the building erected to the memory of the great philanthropist, George Peabody, in which is a gold medal and other testimonials that he received in England. Up the long street from Salem through Peabody they pressed, and at last, before a large brick building, they halted.

"Here we are!" cried Mr. Elston.



"Why, cousin Edward!" Brenda looked at Mr. Elston in surprise. Once before in her life she had been at a County Fair, and she did n't remember anything like this. Ben and Fritz laughed loudly at the look of surprise on Amy's face, as the three girls dismounted.

"We 'll stay and watch the wheels; we 're not fond of pumpkins and patchwork," they cried, as the others went inside.

"I 'll go with you," whispered Arthur Weston to Brenda. He had been very attentive to Brenda on the way over, and had ridden by her side, while the other boys had indulged in trials of speed, and had amused themselves in an independent fashion — just as if there were no girls in the party. Brenda felt rather flattered by his attention; and when he told her how he regretted going back to college, she began to be sorry too, and she almost wavered in her allegiance to Harvard in her interest in this Yale undergraduate.

"There 's one thing you could do, if you were really in earnest," and her eyes beamed with fun, — "you might change your college. You 'd be nearer to me, — that is, to us, if you would come to Harvard. You probably would n't have to drop more than a class."

"If I could make the exchange, I almost would; I would make almost any sacrifice to be near — Boston. But still it is a great deal for you to ask, sister-in-law," Arthur Weston looked at Brenda reproachfully.

"Your saying 'sister-in-law' reminds me," said Brenda, "that Agnes and Ralph wrote that they can be in Boston



for a few days the first week in October. We are going to close the house at Rockley at once, so that we may be at home when they come."

"Then this is almost the last excursion of the summer."

"Yes," responded Brenda; "for after you go off on Monday, Julia and I will have any amount of packing to do, and I shall not have time for wheeling."

"Then you must remember that I was part of this last party," said Arthur, so sentimentally that Brenda darted ahead of him to join Amy and Julia. During the conversation between Arthur and Brenda, the others had been looking at the bits of handiwork, from amateur photographs to patchwork quilt, which had been sent in by the wives and daughters of the farmers of Essex County. They glanced rather hastily at these things, for Mr. Elston thought it unwise for them to tire themselves, in view of the walking they must do on the Fair grounds, and the long homeward ride. They made no effort, therefore, to press through the crowd to see the fruits and vegetables which the farmers of Essex displayed with much pride. Turning up a side road, not so very far beyond the Hall, they soon came upon the Fair grounds.

"A circus!" exclaimed Julia, as she stood at the entrance, while the boys checked the bicycles.

"I have seen several circuses; but I had no idea that a County Fair was like this."

"It's great fun!" replied Brenda; "we can buy peanuts, or do almost anything that we like, as long as cousin Edward is with us." And suiting the action to the word,



she ran over to a stand, where she bought two or three bags of peanuts, and another of popcorn balls. She then patronized the balloon man, and made each of the other girls tie a pink balloon to her belt.

"As a reminder of Philip," said Julia.

"Well, I was n't thinking of him," responded Brenda. At this the others laughed, though why, it would have been hard to tell; and Brenda added, —

"I really am sorry that Philip could not come to-day; he and Tom Hearst are always fine company on excursions."

Overhearing this remark, Arthur Weston put on an injured air, "Harvard always has to come to the front, even at a County Fair."

"We're always fair," responded Amy.

"I'll try not to consider that a pun," said the young man; "but if I had a yacht called 'The Union Jack' would you wear a flag at your button-hole?"

"Without seeing the boat and the flag it's hard to tell," replied Julia, gravely; but Brenda and Amy made no reply, because just at that moment Fritz and Ben came up to urge them to hurry over to the open-air theatre, where a very remarkable man was about to perform a very remarkable feat on the trapeze.

Older persons might have found the County Fair tiresome, after they had admired the sleek animals in their stalls, and the horses that raced or trotted in the ring.

But Mr. Elston's charges found fun in everything. They even peeped in at some of the side-shows, and shot at a target in a funny little shooting-gallery.



"Oh, look, Julia, look! is n't that my gypsy? You saw her the day of the wedding," and Brenda grasped her cousin's arm excitedly.

Glancing where Brenda pointed, Julia saw, only a few feet away, the gypsy whom Mr. Barlow had sent from the house. She was gazing at them rather sullenly, and Julia did not like her expression.

"There!" exclaimed Arthur; "before Mr. Elston returns from his last look at the prize cattle, we'll just have time to have our fortunes told."

"Oh, no," said Julia; "I would n't."

But the young man was headstrong. "I'm going," he said, and before they could stop him, he had reached the woman.

"Really, I believe he's having his fortune told," said Brenda. "I did n't suppose he'd be so silly," forgetting that it was n't so very long a time since she had been equally foolish.

Presently the young man came back, laughing.

"There, I've had my fortune told; and what do you suppose she said?"

"People do not usually tell what the gypsy prophesies," said Amy, demurely.

"Oh, I don't care," retorted Arthur. "But which of you girls has the gypsy a grudge against?"

"Why?"

"Oh, she told me to beware of a dark-haired young lady who was likely to do me much harm."

"Brenda's hair is the darkest," remarked Julia.



"Ah, sister-in-law," said the young man, "I would n't have thought it of you. What are you plotting against me?"

"Nonsense!" cried Brenda. "Of course I'm not plotting anything."

Yet, in spite of her protest, on the homeward ride Brenda was rather quiet, and she rode beside Amy most of the way. They had almost reached Rockley, when Brenda, in bidding good-bye to Amy, jumped from her wheel at a turn of the road. Instead of standing it against a tree or fence for support, she rather carelessly left it lying at the edge of the road. Unluckily, just at that moment Arthur came dashing around the corner. Before Brenda could pick up her wheel, he had grazed against it with just force enough to throw himself off. In an instant Mr. Elston came up to him, and assisted him to his feet. The young man gave a sharp cry of pain, as he tried to put his left foot to the ground.

"You've really done it, sister-in-law," he said, as Brenda looked at him, too much disturbed, really, to speak.

"Run on, Fritz, to Rockley, and have Thomas bring a carriage at once, and telephone for the doctor," said Mr. Elston, as he made a place on the grassy margin of the road where Arthur could rest comfortably until help came.

Luckily the young man, while his foot was at rest, was not in great pain, and his high spirits did not desert him.

"Really, sister-in-law," he said, "I would n't have thought it of you, — to treat me this way, and I a visitor at your father's house. But there's one satisfaction; you



see the gypsy was right. Ugh! but it *does* hurt," and he tried not to show his pain.

Luckily, when the doctor examined the injury, he found that though the ankle was really sprained, a few weeks of complete rest would set the young man on his feet again.

Yet although the injury was slight, compared with what it might have been, the doctor strictly ordered Arthur not to use his foot. At New Haven he might have been tempted to disobey, — and so Arthur himself saw that it was wisest to accept Mrs. Barlow's invitation to remain a week or two with her.

"I'm as happy as a king," he would murmur, as he reclined in a deep chair with his foot supported on an ottoman which Mrs. Barlow had made just the right height for him.

"I'm as happy as a king, for neither sister-in-law, nor you, Julia, would dare to refuse me anything I ask."

"You'd better not be too sure," responded Julia, with a smile. "I am more independent than Brenda, for I had nothing to do with your accident. However, as you've been pretty patient this morning, I'll play you just one game of hjalma, although I really dislike games."

"You're very good," said Arthur, as Julia moved away to get the hjalma board, "but is n't that Brenda's step?" and he listened intently to a footfall on the piazza.

"Ah, galley-slave!" he exclaimed, as she approached. "Julia is released, and you, sister-in-law, must take her place at the board."

"Why, I have no objection," said Brenda; "I'd rather



play a game than read aloud. I'm awfully tired of that 'Holy Roman Empire' that you've been making me read to you this week; I don't understand a word of it."

"Of course not," and the young man shook his head; "that's your penance for having thrown me off my bicycle. It's your duty now to help me keep my standing in college."

"That's a pretty poor pun!" exclaimed Julia, from the corner where she had seated herself with a book.

"It certainly is," responded Brenda. But Arthur took no notice of their criticism. Already he had begun to arrange his men on the board, and apparently was planning his campaign.

Thus for Julia and Brenda the last week or two of the summer ended, in the care of a very lively invalid who insisted that one or the other of the two should always be ready to amuse him. We may call these the last weeks of summer, even though the month was really October. For on the North Shore it is "summer" with the cottagers until they return to the city. Arthur left Rockley a week before Mrs. Barlow and her family went up to Boston. He leaned a little on the crutch which his brother had sent him, and which his doctor had insisted on his using; but he was bright and cheerful as ever.

"I forgive you, sister-in-law," he called to Brenda, as he stepped aboard the car.

"We shall miss him," said Mrs. Barlow, with a sigh, as she turned away. "Arthur certainly has been a great addition to our summer."



"He and Amy," responded Brenda, loyal to the new friend from whom in many ways she had learned so much.

"Arthur and Amy have certainly helped you a great deal," said Mrs. Barlow.

"Helped me? Arthur?" questioned Brenda.

"Why, yes," and Mrs. Barlow smiled. "I am sure that Arthur has developed unexpected powers of patience in you, just as Amy has taught you to be more contented. You are sure of that, are you not?"

"I am sure that Amy has taught me many things, and that without her I could hardly enjoy another summer at Rockley."











# Brenda, Her School and Her Club

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By HELEN LEAH REED

Author of "Brenda's Summer at Rockley," "Miss Theodora," etc.

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